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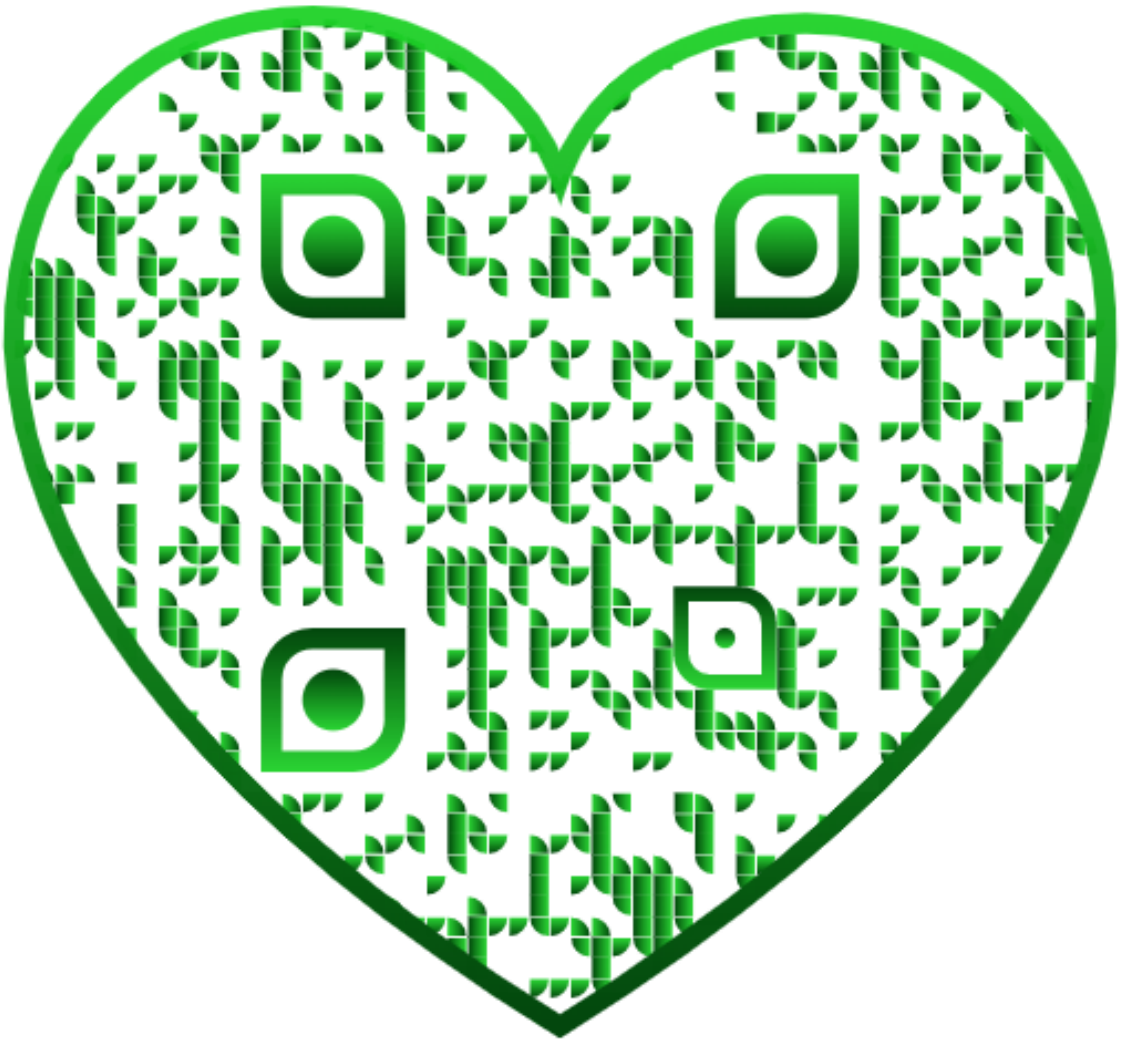

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EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING OFFICES
149 5th Ave., 9th Floor, New York, NY 10010
(212) 768-2966; FAX: (212) 944-9279
EMAIL **soundingboard@guitarworld.com**
WEB PAGE **guitarworld.com**

BUSINESS
VP/PUBLISHING DIRECTOR, MUSIC **Anthony Danzi**
adanzi@futureus.com
PUBLISHER **Greg Di Benedetto**
greg@guitarworld.com
AD DIRECTOR **Robert Dye**
646-723-5431, robert@guitarworld.com
ADVERTISING SALES **Jason Perl**
646-723-5419, jperl@futureus.com
ADVERTISING SALES **Scott Sciacca**
646-723-5478, ssciacca@futureus.com
ADVERTISING SALES **Jeff Tyson**
646-723-5421, jtyson@futureus.com
AD COORDINATOR **Anna Blumenthal**
646-723-5404, anna@guitarworld.com
MARKETING MANAGER **Chris Campana**
646-723-5416, ccampana@futureus.com

PRODUCTION
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR **Richie Lesovoy**
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR **Nicole Schilling**
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FUTURE US, INC.
4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080
www.futureus.com

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NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN **Roger Parry**
CHIEF EXECUTIVE **Stevie Spring**
GROUP FINANCE DIRECTOR **John Bowman**
Tel +44 1225 442244
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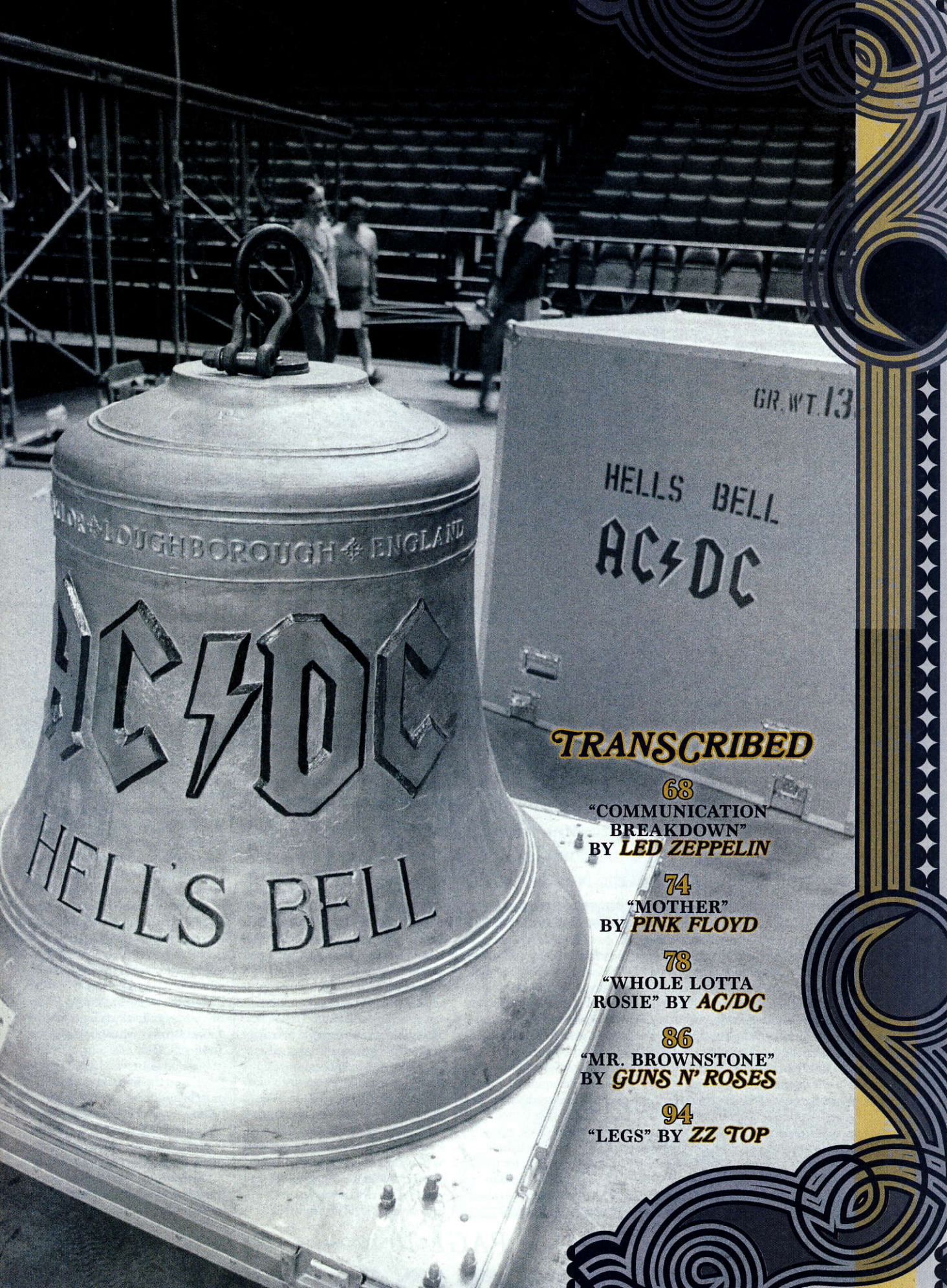

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1969: The Greatest Year in Rock

***GUITAR LEGENDS** takes a month-by-month look at the albums and events that shaped **1969**, the most pivotal year in rock and roll.*

GUITAR LEGENDS #109

NINETEEN SIXTY-NINE WAS A MAD, mad year. Across the USA, people protested silently or violently against the Vietnam War, racism and poverty. Men with crewcuts traversed the moon's surface in giant leaps and bounds. Against all odds, the New York Jets won the Super Bowl and the New York Mets won the World Series.

IN SCENIC BETHEL, New York, a joyous crowd, half a million strong, braved the elements and personal discomfort to witness history at Woodstock. Outside lovely San Francisco, California, at Altamont Speedway, equally joyous crowds joined the Rolling Stones in witnessing murder.

1969 was the best of times and the wildest of times, so it should come as no surprise that it was an incredible year for music. So incredible, in fact, that we at *Guitar World* believe it to have been the *greatest* rock and roll year of them all. Yes, that's a big statement, the kind of proclamation one associates with boorish, opinionated know-nothings. Now, before we take offense at such a harsh characterization, let us hastily make this point: We got the proof.

The proof, so to speak, is in the vinyl. The notion of 1969's supremacy is, of course, an opinion—until one examines the incredible number of landmark albums issued in that glorious year. True, many fine records first saw the light in 1968, 1970, 1979 and 1994, for that matter, but nothing compares to MCMLXIX when it comes to sheer volume of rock achievement.

But how is "achievement" gauged? On the one hand, there is the matter of durability. Turn on any classic radio station tomorrow morning and you will find an incredible array of songs recorded in 1969 in regular rotation. Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love" (*Led Zeppelin II*). Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Bad Moon Rising" (*Green River*). The Who's "Pinball Wizard"(*Tommy*). These songs are not oldies, but as current as the latest crises in the Balkans. Another measure of greatness, whether an album was issued in 1969 or 1989, is its impact on subsequent generations of musicians. Where would today's punk rockers be without Iggy Pop's *The Stooges* and the MC5's *Kick Out the Jams*? 50,000 rock and metal bands without the two Led Zeppelin albums of '69? The world without *Let It Bleed* and *Abbey Road*?

On a more specific guitar level, 1969 was a bonanza of power and glory. The arrival of the Allman Brothers Band, with their twin guitars from heaven. The novel tunings and sweet rhythms of Crosby, Stills and Nash. And the fantastic funk stylings of James Brown's unsung guitarist, Jimmy Nolen.

The moment which best represents all the fire and rain of a most chaotic and creative time belongs to Jimi Hendrix, who on one July day at the Woodstock festival forever enshrined a cosmic moment in an incredible year with his majestic version of "The Star-Spangled Banner." It was 1969, and America rocked.

JANUARY *Led Zeppelin* ★ LED ZEPPELIN

Led Zeppelin in the dressing room of the Lyceum Theatre, London, October 12, 1969

NEIL ZLOZOWER

IT WAS EARLY IN THE summer of 1968 and Jimmy Page was deeply preoccupied. For several years he had worked like a dog to build a reputation as one of England's finest session guitarists, playing on many of the records released in Britain in the 1963–1965 era, including albums by the Who, the Rolling Stones, the Kinks, Tom Jones and many others. He then parlayed his notoriety into a year-long stint with the Yardbirds, whose previous guitarists, Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck, had gone on to become full-fledged legends. Page, it was assumed, would be next in line. Unfortunately, due to the pressures of touring, the Yardbirds disintegrated just as he was beginning to come into his own.

With his band and career in complete disarray, Page stood at a crossroads. He could resume his session work, return to art school, or try his luck at creating a new band. The guitarist, determined to take a shot at big-time rock success, decided to forge ahead. To that end, he carefully devised a blueprint for his ideal band. That he would actually see his plans come to fruition and, in doing so, shake the very foundation of rock, would no doubt have surprised Page.

"The band that I envisioned would combine blues, hard rock and acoustic music and top it all off with heavy choruses," remembers Page. "It would be a combination that had never been done before. Lots of light and shade."

In a stroke of cosmic luck, Page quickly found just the right men to help him achieve his rather ambitious musical goals. John Paul Jones, one of England's finest session bassists, keyboardists and arrangers, was tired of the studio grind and asked to join Jimmy's new band. Page, recognizing Jones' talent and versatility, immediately enlisted the multi-instrumentalist.

> *"Musically, I saw Zeppelin as a marriage of blues, hard rock and acoustic music, topped with heavy choruses. It would be a combination that had never been done before. Lots of light and shade."*
> *—Jimmy Page*

Vocalist Robert Plant, recommended by two of Page's friends, was also a remarkable find. He looked every inch the lead singer, and his volcanic, androgynous voice was suitable for everything from the raunchiest blues to the most delicate ballad. But perhaps Page's greatest discovery was drummer John Bonham, who had played with Plant in previous bands. Page had wanted a very powerful drummer, but Bonham was "beyond the realms of anything I could have possibly imagined. He was superhuman. Besides being one of the best drummers I've ever heard, he was also one of the loudest. He was the reason we had to start buying bigger amps. And his playing wasn't in his arms; it was all in his wrist action. Frightening! I still don't know how he managed to get so much level out of a kit."

With his dream band assembled, Page was so confident he decided to record the band himself and sell the results to the highest bidder. The quartet, now officially named Led Zeppelin, assembled in London's Olympic Studios in November of 1968, with Page producing. After only a few weeks of rehearsal and a short tour, they cut their groundbreaking debut in a mere 30 hours, at a cost of 1,700 English pounds.

But even on this tight schedule, the band, just as Page had envisioned, produced plenty of "light and shade." From the ominous heavy metal epic "Dazed and Confused" to the folky "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You" to the quicksilver pop of "Communication Breakdown," Zep's power, versatility and imagination were undeniable.

With the album finished, Page enlisted former Yardbirds manager Peter Grant to take Led Zeppelin to the bank. Using the guitarist's association with the Yardbirds as bait, the ruthless Grant worked out a five-year worldwide distribution deal with Atlantic Records. Under its landmark terms, Led Zeppelin were promised total creative control—their records would be produced independently, without any label interference. The group would also control all jacket artwork, press ads, publicity pictures and anything else related to their image. The basic outline of this remarkable contract later influenced the Rolling Stones, another Atlantic band, in their dealings with the label. Both bands retained complete control over all creative processes, leaving only the manufacture and distribution of albums and, to a limited degree, promotion to Atlantic.

On January 12, the same week the Beatles' "White Album" was No. 1 on the *Billboard* charts, *Led Zeppelin* was released. It entered the album charts at 99, from which it jumped to 40, then 28. Its highest position was No. 10, but the album remained on the charts for a remarkable 73 consecutive weeks. While Led Zeppelin's immediate impact was surprising, especially for a new band, it was even more impressive considering the group's popularity was achieved primarily through word-of-mouth. There were no singles released from their debut, they had little radio exposure and practically no support from the rock press, who were caught off-guard by the band's overnight success.

JANUARY ALBUM RELEASES

Odessa—The Bee Gees
Bayou Country—Creedence Clearwater Revival
English Rose—Fleetwood Mac
Yellow Submarine (Soundtrack)—The Beatles

FEBRUARY *Eric Clapton and Steve Winwood form BLIND FAITH*

WITH ITS MEMBERS DRAWN from Traffic and Cream, two of the most popular groups of the era, Blind Faith was hailed as rock's first supergroup.

The band started when Eric Clapton, who had just left Cream, reached out to Traffic's Steve Winwood in hopes of forming a new band. Inspired by the tight arrangements and selfless interplay of the Band, Clapton wanted his next venture to include none of the endless soloing and egotism which had been Cream's calling card. But unbeknownst to the guitarist, Winwood had, in the meantime, invited Cream's Ginger Baker to join the project. Despite Clapton's fears that the public would see the new group as an extension of Cream, he decided to soldier on.

Recording began in February 1969 at Morgan Studios in London. The name Blind Faith had not yet been suggested, and the trio booked studio time under the name Baker-Clapton-Winwood. Recording with engineer Andy Johns, the group put down basic tracks for two songs, "Well All Right" and "Presence of the Lord."

After a handful of sessions, everyone stepped back and evaluated their progress. It was decided that a bassist should be added to the trio and Ric Grech, formerly of the Family, was selected. "We had run into [*Ric Grech*] on a few occasions and he seemed a very sympathetic kind of fellow, so he was in," Winwood says.

By late May 1969, the band had come up with only two incomplete songs, and both Robert Stigwood, manager of Baker and Clapton, and Chris Blackwell, Winwood's label's chief, were becoming increasingly exasperated. The two had organized a massive publicity campaign to promote the forthcoming album, as well as a crowded U.S. tour itinerary. The pressure to capitalize on their lucrative reputations was not lost on Baker, Clapton and Winwood. "It had become obvious during that era that artists could be considered hot property," remarks Winwood.

Blind Faith in 1969: (from left) Steve Winwood, Ric Grech, Ginger Baker and Eric Clapton

Such was the enthusiasm for the new group, now known as Blind Faith, that on June 7, they decided to make their public debut in London's massive Hyde Park. The free concert drew in excess of 100,000 people, an astonishing feat considering that the group had yet to issue a single song.

Blind Faith's uneven performance at Hyde Park, coupled with the tenuous status of their unfinished debut album, heightened fears that the group might not be ready. To salvage their studio effort, Chris Blackwell turned to producer Jimmy Miller, hailed for his innovative work with Traffic and the Rolling Stones. Miller joined the band at Olympic and galvanized them with his trademark enthusiasm.

"I received a frantic call from Chris Blackwell, asking me to pull the situation together," remembered Miller in 1993. "I went through those tapes they had recorded and knew that they could do so much better. Because of the limited time available, we worked nonstop for a week until the album finally came together."

> *"It had become obvious during that era that artists could be considered hot property."*
> —*Steve Winwood*

Miller called for retakes of "Presence of the Lord," but none of the new efforts could match the intensity of the original Morgan Studios recording. However, an Olympic remake of "Had to Cry Today" vastly upgraded the previous effort.

The album was finally completed when the group replaced an electric version of "Can't Find My Way Home" with a superb acoustic rendition. Andy Johns, recruited by Miller from Morgan Studios to record the session, captured the group performing live in Olympic's massive Studio A with just three microphones. Led by Winwood's delicate vocal and Baker's exquisite percussion accents, the results were spectacular.

Released in July 1969, *Blind Faith* instantly enjoyed enormous commercial success throughout the world. A huge public relations flap over the album's risqué cover brought the "supergroup" additional notoriety. Designed and photographed by Bob Seideman, the cover artwork featured Baker's bare-chested 11-year-old daughter brandishing a toy airplane built by Baker and Grech. Amid howls of protest, Atco Records issued a substitute cover, which featured a staid black and white group photo. The resulting publicity only served to fuel the album's meteoric rise to the top of the *Billboard* charts.

Their summer U.S. tour was equally successful, but the group quickly came apart. "It became very difficult when we went out on the road," explains Winwood. "As soon as we got started, we realized that this really wasn't happening. We just fulfilled our commitments and decided to have a rethink. Still, I enjoy that album and look back at that experience with fond memories."

FEBRUARY ALBUM RELEASES

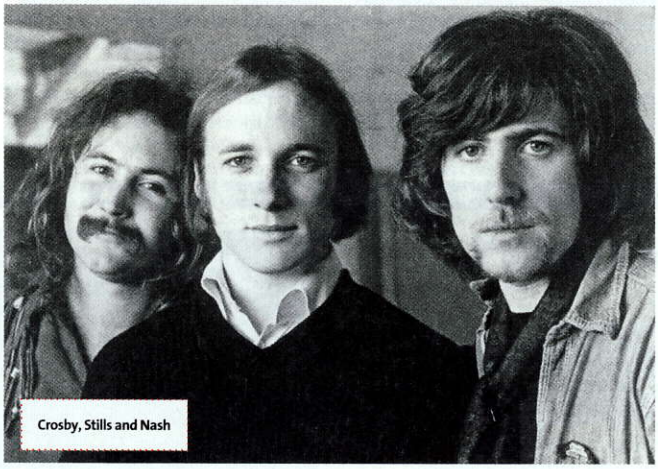
Ball—Iron Butterfly *Dr. Byrds & Mr. Hyde*—The Byrds
Bless Its Pointed Little Head—Jefferson Airplane
Instant Replay—The Monkees *Kick Out the Jams*—The MC5

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

MARCH *Crosby, Stills & Nash get it together*

DAVID CROSBY, STEPHEN STILLS and Graham Nash had each fled from one of rock's great mid-Sixties outfits—Crosby from the Byrds, Stills from Buffalo Springfield and Nash from the Hollies. They knew of each other and had even met, but they didn't become collaborators until each had gravitated to Los Angeles. Nash recalls the song which cemented their partnership—"You Don't Have to Cry." "It turned out to be nothing short of musical magic," Nash says. "When we heard ourselves for the first time, it was truly astounding to us as musicians that these three people from such diverse backgrounds can meld and come together with that sound."

Soon after, the trio landed a recording contract with Atlantic Records and set to work making its debut album, *Crosby, Stills & Nash* during February 1969 at Wally Heider's studio in Hollywood. The



Crosby, Stills and Nash

songs were strong, from "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" through "Marrakesh Express," "Long Time Gone," "Blue Eyes," "Guinnevere" and "Wooden Ships." And they were infused with equally dynamic musical ideas, such as the lead guitar lines that snake through "Marrakesh Express" and the backwards guitar licks in "Long Time Gone," which Stills came up with during an all-night session after everyone had gone home.

The Cuban-flavored outro on "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" was added to inject a bit of life to the album's long (7:28) opening cut. "The little kicker at the end of the song was just to liven it up," Stills writes in the 1991 box set's liner notes, "because it had gone on forever and I didn't want it to fall apart. I said 'Now that we've sung all these lyrics about one thing, let's change the subject entirely.' And we did. Even did it in a different language just to make sure nobody could understand it."

For "Helplessly Hoping," meanwhile, the trio couldn't find a steel guitar player, so Stills mimicked the sound by using a volume pedal and a Gretsch with a tone bar.

Released in May 1969, *Crosby, Stills & Nash* made an immediate impact, hitting No. 6 on the *Billboard* charts and going Gold in just a few months. It promptly kicked open the door for the simultaneously gentle and urgent Southern California folk-rock sound that would dominate the early Seventies via artists such as the Eagles, Jackson Browne, America and James Taylor.

MARCH ALBUM RELEASES *Goodbye*—Cream *Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud*—James Brown *The Velvet Underground*—The Velvet Underground *From Genesis to Revelation*—Genesis

APRIL *Sly and the Family Stone* ★ STAND!

THIRTY YEARS HAVE PASSED since the album's release, but Freddie Stewart (a.k.a. Freddie Stone) barely pauses when asked to provide his assessment of Sly and the Family Stone's Stand!

"Oh, man, that was the greatest—our greatest album, without a doubt," says the group's guitarist and the younger brother of leader Sly Stone. "It's my favorite because we were still fresh and hungry and sharp."

Still fresh as a spring breeze, *Stand!* represents the Family Stone at the height of their powers. For a real sense of *Stand!*'s weight, consider its song list: "Everyday People," "Sing a Simple Song," "You Can Make It If You Try," the scorchingly political "Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey," the title track and—if all that wasn't enough—the boom-shaka-laka revelation of the seminal Sly track, "I Want to Take You Higher."

But if modern listeners recognize *Stand!* for the masterpiece that it is, Family Stone members say they didn't recognize this at the time. Rather, says bassist Larry

Sly & the Family Stone

Graham, they were accustomed to the slow growth the group experienced since former DJ Stone put it together in 1967.

"There was obviously growth," Graham says, "not just in the band but in Sly as a writer, too. You could hear the songs getting stronger, the melodies getting stronger. We were becoming a better band, better musicians, and he was becoming a better writer."

Sly had developed his own way of writing, too, a less-is-more approach which left the band a melody and a basic rhythmic structure to work with. The musicians would subsequently craft their own parts during rehearsals.

"No one was held to any rules," Freddie remembers. "It wasn't necessarily about playing the traditional guitar part or the traditional bass part or the traditional horn line. It was about giving the musicians the freedom to create a part that they thought was appropriate."

Planning, in fact, usually worked against the group—as Freddie learned while crafting his solo for the instrumental "Sex Machine." "I sat at home and rehearsed and rehearsed it," he says, "and went to the studio and couldn't play anything. I was there two, three, maybe four hours trying to play it. Sly realized I probably had rehearsed it and tried to make it something, so he said 'Go home, Fred. Go to sleep, man. Don't even think about it. Come back tomorrow.'

"So I came back the next day

and they turned it on, and by the time it got to my part everything I'd rehearsed was gone. I just played whatever I wanted to play, and that was it."

Graham's fondest memory of the album was the bass part for "Everyday People," a single G note which, chugging its way through the song, proved as effective as it was unorthodox. "I'd never done that before," he says. "The song just felt like that to me. That's where

APRIL ALBUM RELEASES
Nashville Skyline—Bob Dylan
On the Threshold of a Dream—The Moody Blues

ALL PHOTOS MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

the freedom of creativity came in for the band. We would be allowed to do that."

Graham also credits that spirit for his bass overdub on "I Want to Take You Higher," for which he plugged into a fuzz pedal—which, he notes, "was the kind of thing reserved for guitar players back then. But since I played guitar before I played bass, plugging a bass into a fuzz or a wah-wah didn't seem odd to me."

With four singles hitting the *Billboard* charts—including "Everyday People" at No. 1 for four weeks—the *Stand!* album won Sly and the Family Stone the embrace of both the pop mainstream and the counterculture. It was the group's first million-seller, and footage from its heroic middle-of-the-night performance at Woodstock is still incendiary enough to prompt lighter-flicking from crowds at occasional midnight showings.

It was also a plateau from which the group would gradually fall. Increasing drug problems made it notoriously unreliable on tour. Members began drifting away, and by the mid Seventies the damage was irreversible.

"I believe in providence, man," says Freddie. "I think that Sly and the Family Stone was ordained. It just had something that was great and unique and possible only with that group of people at that particular time."

MAY *The Who* ★ TOMMY

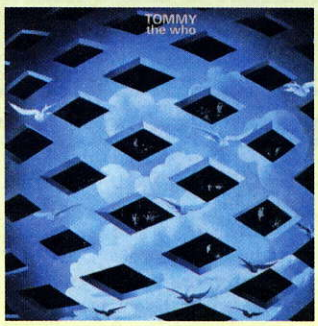
BEFORE TOMMY CAME OUT in 1969, the Who were a cult band in America. Making their recording debut in 1965 and U.S. tour debut in '67, they had missed out on the big British Invasion of '63–'64 which had established the Beatles, Stones, Kinks and others in the States. They'd pretty much fallen between America's two big Sixties youth culture moments, Beatlemania and the Summer of Love. And as Pete Townshend prepared for the Who's fourth album, he was frankly worried:

"We were feeling quite out of touch and out of place, thinking, God, we're not selling singles anymore, and neither do we fit into this new psychedelic era. We're not an experimental band like the Pink Floyd. We're not a guitar-based blues band like Cream. We don't have the kind of extreme genius of Hendrix. What do we do? And I started to look at composition as a big issue."

Always looking for ways to expand beyond his ability to write absolutely brilliant three-minute pop songs, Townshend had already composed two 15-minute "mini operas" for the Who's second and third albums. But, as early as '67, he'd begun talking about a project on a much grander scale—a piece that would be album length or longer, like a conventional opera, with a fully developed story line based around what at the time seemed to be a very unusual main character: a deaf, dumb and blind boy whose reality consisted purely of vibrations. Townshend hoped to convey this vibratory inner universe through music.

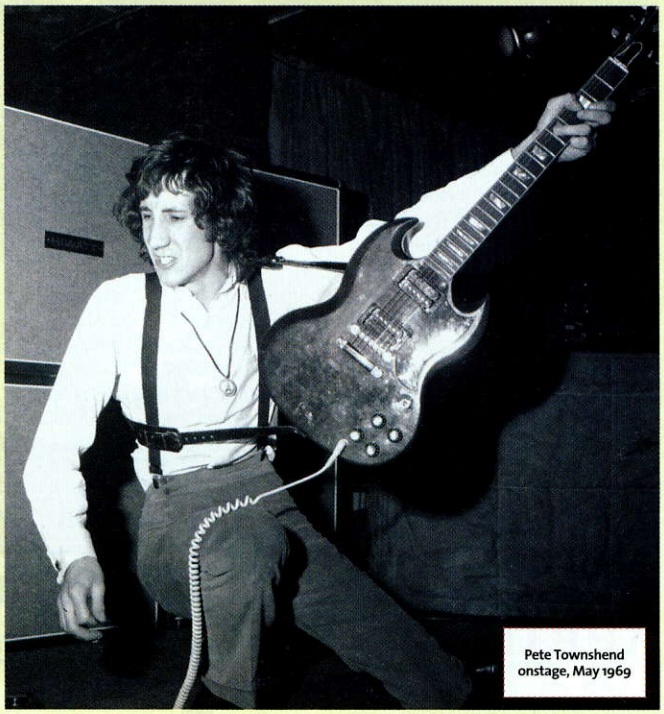
"I suppose what was different about the approach of it affected the way I wrote it," Townshend says of *Tommy*. "I was very meticulous about making sure that the composition and harmonies were very structured and clean. I think it was the first cohesive piece in which I used quite a lot of piano, really. 'Amazing Journey' was written on piano and voiced for the guitar afterwards. And 'I'm Free' was actually written on a Lowery organ and later voiced for guitar."

The latter two songs were among the first Townshend brought with him when work on *Tommy* began at London's IBC Studios, scene of many prior Who recordings. Other early compositions for Tommy included "We're Not Gonna Take It," "Sensation," "Amazing Journey," Welcome" and "Sally Simpson." Some of these had originally been written about



other subjects and subsequently worked into *Tommy*'s plotline. "I'm Free" and "Welcome" reflected Townshend's recent spiritual awakening as a follower of Indian guru Meher Baba—an aspect of Pete's life that was to loom large in *Tommy*. Other pieces of the rock opera were lifted from earlier Townshend compositions. The now-familiar "Underture" instrumental theme was originally part of "Rael," the Townshend mini opera that closed 1967's *The Who Sell Out*. "It's a Boy" was originally the coda to an earlier tune called "Glow Girl," except the lyric there was "It's a girl."

The project ended up taking a long time to record, as frustrations mounted within the band and Townshend struggled to tie up the threads of his ambitious narrative. He worked closely with the Who's manager and producer at the time, Kit Lambert, who had earlier tutored the young Pete on classical music, fine wines and other highbrow matters. In true Townshend fashion, *Tommy*'s multi-layered story line reflects much that was going on in his life at the time—not only his spiritual interests, but his growing disillusionment with rock stardom as well. The work also deals with another perennial Townshend theme: the profound and often devastating psychological effect parents have on their children.


Pete Townshend onstage, May 1969

Pete ended up scrapping an earlier plan to overdub orchestral instruments onto the tracks the Who had recorded for *Tommy*. Bassist John Entwistle complained that time ran out and the band couldn't even complete the overdubs they had planned to do themselves. Time limitations may even explain the piece's notoriously ambiguous ending. Does *Tommy* revert to his earlier state of deaf, dumb and blind catatonia when his disciples reject him in the end? Or does that rejection touch off a new spiritual awakening? Happy ending, or sad?

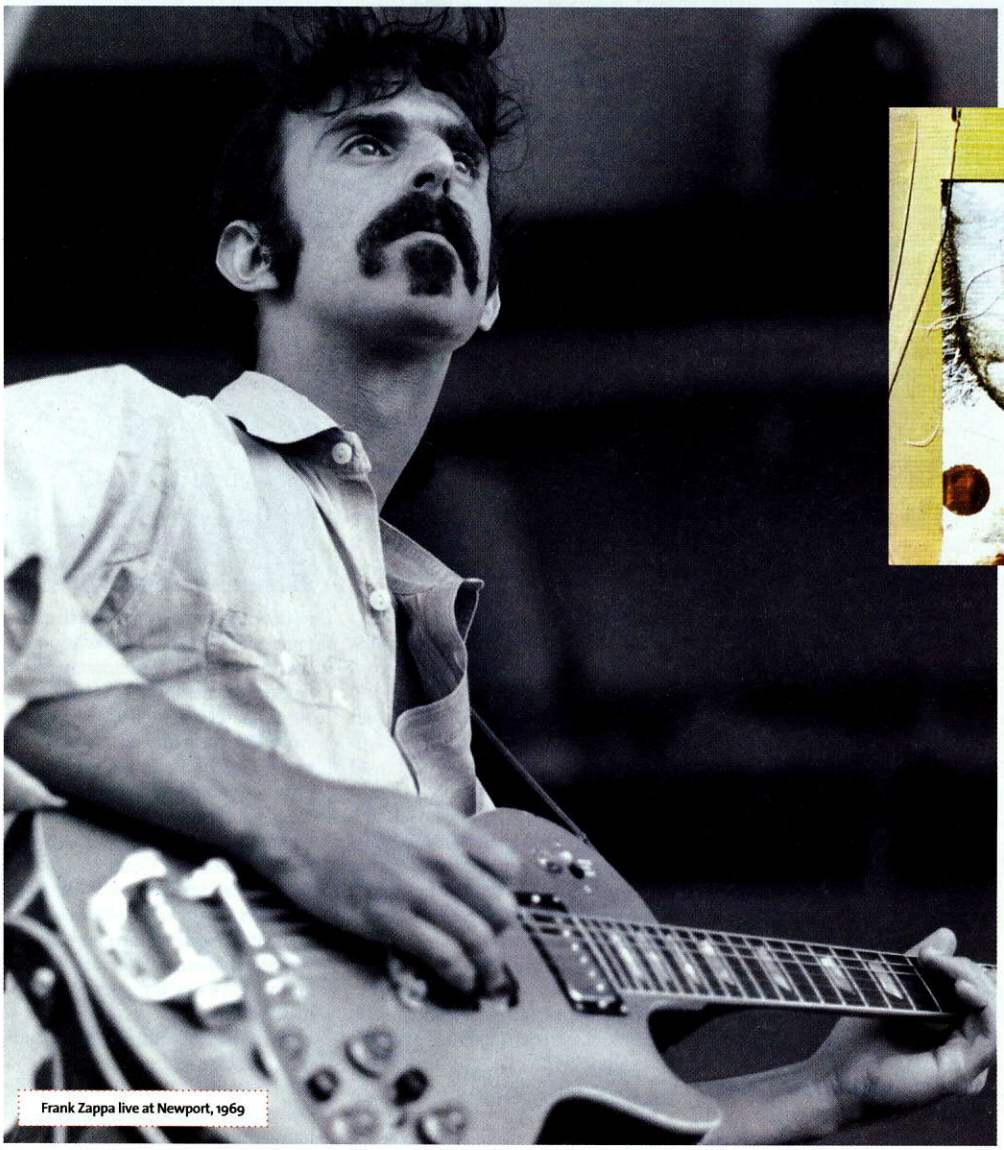
Ultimately, of course, it didn't matter. *Tommy* became a phenomenal success as soon as it was released in 1969. Rock fans loved discussing and debating the ending. The relatively spare instrumentation threw the bold inventiveness of Townshend's writing into sharp relief and made *Tommy* more a bona fide rock and roll album than an exercise in high culture. *Tommy* secured the Who's place in the classic rock pantheon. Rock's first grand opera has been revived many times, onstage, on film and in numerous other media, making its creator a very rich man, indeed.

MAY ALBUM RELEASES *Clouds*—Joni Mitchell
Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere—Neil Young

MONITOR PICTURE LIBRARY / RETNA UK

JUNE *Frank Zappa* ★ UNCLE MEAT

FRANK ZAPPA'S MASTERWORK, *Uncle Meat*, is the rock album that destroyed more boundaries and shattered more "pop music" preconceptions than any album that came before or since. More than two hours in length, the album takes its listeners on a swirling journey through an incredible world of musical styles, sounds, dialogues and studio-manipulated "audio events."



Frank Zappa live at Newport, 1969

The sixth album featuring the Mothers of Invention, Zappa's original band, *Uncle Meat* is the blossoming ground of musical concepts first investigated on the Zappa/Mothers 1966 debut, *Freak Out!* Following *Freak Out!*, the artist regularly churned out two records each year, pushing the envelope further with each release.

By the time the tracks on *Uncle Meat* were recorded (late '67/early '68), Zappa's vision had expanded to the point where it was full-blown "music as cinematography," intercutting doses of real-life dialogue and *musique concrète*—real-world sounds and events—with scripted and improvised dialogue, daring modern classical compositions (featuring densely complex orchestrations of woodwinds, percussion and tape effects) and handfuls of bouncy, Fifties-inspired doo-wop, wrapped up in one massive aural collage. Even the album's cover, designed by Cal Schenkel, depicts a striking collage of seemingly unrelated images.

"The late Sixties were an incredibly creative time for Frank," recalls Gail Zappa, the guitarist's wife and administrator of his enormous catalogue. "Right around the same time as *Uncle Meat*, Frank had done the Captain Beefheart album, *Trout Mask Replica*, plus *An Evening with Wildman Fisher*, the GTO's album and, of course, his own *Ruben and the Jets*. He was generating a tremendous output—it was a crazy, intense time."

Uncle Meat was recorded at New York's Apostolic Studios. Zappa used loads of overdubbing to create expansive orchestral arrangements, as heard on "Uncle Meat: Main Title Theme," "Legend of the Golden Arches" and "Dog Breath," and he also twiddled liberally with a V.S.O. (variable speed oscillator) on "Project X" and "Nine Types of Industrial Pollution." Then there is the timeless classic, "King Kong" (presented in six different arrangements), regarded as one of Zappa's greatest compositions.

As Zappa states in the liner notes, *Uncle Meat* had evolved into a film idea, indicating that the album represented "most of the music from the Mothers movie of the same name, which we haven't got enough money to finish yet." He went on, "This is an album of music from a movie you will probably never get to see."

The liner notes offer a synopsis of a plot involving an evil scientist named Uncle Meat, who creates an equally evil mutant rock band, Ruben and the Jets. This mutant rockin' combo emits sound waves that "attack the glandular system of the victim, destroying his will and forcing his body to quiver helplessly, while crazed fantasies race through his mind."

What does all of this mean? "It's pretty obvious, isn't it?" laughs Gail. "First of all, he talks about their noses expanding—in other words, *erectile tissue* as a governing force. I think you know what that means! It's about the manipulation of people who are *asleep*—unconscious and not aware. Social engineering not to your advantage, which is the way the real world works, unfortunately. Frank was *very* aware, and wanted to wake people up by jarring their senses."

JUNE ALBUM RELEASES

Aoxomoxoa—The Grateful Dead
At San Quentin—Johnny Cash
Deep Purple III—Deep Purple
A Salty Dog—Procol Harum

DAVID REDFERN / REDFERNS / RETNA LTD.

The Doors performing "Touch Me" on *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*, 1969

JULY *The Doors* ★ THE SOFT PARADE

"BY THE END OF 1968, we had recorded three albums featuring the Doors in their truest and purest essence," says keyboardist Ray Manzarek. "It was time to feature the Doors with augmentation. That was the whole idea behind *The Soft Parade*."

The band's fourth album, *The Soft Parade* featured the quartet of Manzarek, guitarist Robby Krieger, drummer John Densmore and singer Jim Morrison "augmented" by bassist Harvey Brooks and, on several songs, by string and horn sections.

"I was skeptical," Krieger admits. "I thought that the Doors would be lost and it would just become Jim and the Big Band. I was wrong, and I really didn't realize it until I first heard the horns on 'Touch Me' booming through the big studio speakers."

Credit for the idea of bolstering the Doors' sound with additional instrumentation belongs to Manzarek, who says he was inspired not by the Beatles but by some American giants. "I was knocked out by the first Blood, Sweat and Tears record [Child Is Father to the Man *(1968)*]," he says. "I am a jazzer and have always loved horns. But what Al Kooper did with Blood, Sweat and Tears illustrated how those same ideas could successfully be applied to rock and roll. That's what I wanted to do. Jim said, 'Sure, man, that sounds great. Let's give it a try.' "

The Soft Parade would prove to be the most difficult Doors album to record, taking over a year to complete—an enormous amount of time for a band which released their first two albums in one year (1967). The long recording process had nothing to do with the additional musicians.

"It was a lengthy process for a variety of reasons," says Manzarek. "None of those songs existed before. We were writing and creating them right then and there, and, as always, some songs came very quickly and others needed to be worked out and reworked until they fell into place. We were on the road, then we were rehearsing and writing, then we were recording, all of it sort of overlapping. So we'd lay down some tracks, go back to our rehearsal space, and try to work out another tune. On our previous albums, the material was together before we hit the studio.

"And at that point Jim began his drinking binge. Not that he hadn't been drinking before, but it was now taken to a whole new level. This was no longer a young man's drinking; it was a full-grown man's drinking. There were a lot of days where we had to just say, 'Jim's unable to do anything,' so we would work songs out without him. But his vocal lines often changed the arrangements a lot, so that also dragged things out. And there started being periods where we didn't see him for five days or a week at a time. Then he'd show up and go, 'Okay, let's get back to work.' It wasn't an environment conducive to getting things done real quickly."

> *"The Doors were a balancing act between the light and the dark. If we didn't balance the dark with the light, we would have been fools. And we were not fools."*
> —Ray Manzarek

Most tracks by the core quartet (and bassist Brooks) were cut together live, with the strings and horns added in just a day or two at the end of the sessions. The horn players were top-shelf jazz musicians—"we knew who to call, man," notes Manzarek—while the string section was put together by engineer Bruce Botnick's father, Norman, who played violin and viola. The horn and string arrangements were done by a friend of producer Paul Rothchild's, Paul Harris, who also worked on B.B. King's string-heavy breakthrough hit, "The Thrill Is Gone."

The results produced a hit single ("Touch Me") and an album which made it to No. 6 on the charts, proving that fans were not turned off by the Doors' temporary change in direction.

"I think the album fits right in there with our other ones," says Manzarek. "It's just the Doors with horns and strings, man. I always hated the notion that we were just a dark, spooky band. *The Soft Parade* showed that we could do other things, too."

PAUL FERRARA/THE DOORS PHOTO ARCHIVE

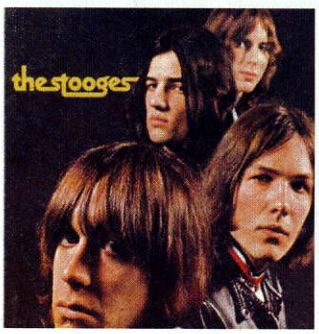
JULY ALBUM RELEASES

Unhalfbricking—Fairport Convention *Yes*—Yes

Iggy with Stooges Dave Alexander (left) and Ron Asheton, 1969

The Band in the early Seventies

AUGUST
The Stooges ★ THE STOOGES



WHILE THE LATE SIXTIES ARE remembered fondly as an era when artists of all kinds strove to "make a difference," the Stooges' were not at all inspired by or even interested in the changing times around them. Young, loud and snotty, these four degenerates from Ann Arbor, Michigan, were interested only in feedback, fucking and getting fucked up, and their debut album reflected those concerns. "I was saying no to organizations, no to assholes, no to ideals other than personal," Stooges frontman Iggy Pop recalls in his 1997 autobiography, *I Need More*.

The Stooges were not only flipping the bird to the politicized pop of the day but were also showing a total disregard for accepted notions of song structure, melody and musicianship. "I really didn't have use for rationality or harmony," Pop states in his autobiography. And the singer isn't exaggerating one bit: *The Stooges* is a brutish, primitive assault on the senses—a masterful manipulation of monotony.

"The first thing to remember about Stooge music is that it is monotonous and simplistic on purpose," observed rock critic Lester Bangs in 1970. "The Stooges work deftly with musical ideas that may not be highly sophisticated (God forbid) but are certainly advanced... A trained monkey could probably learn to play the two-chord line underneath ["*1969*"], but no monkey and very few indeed of their cousins half-a-dozen rungs up on the evolutionary ladder...could think of using it in the vivid way it is here, with a simplicity that's so basic it's almost pristine."

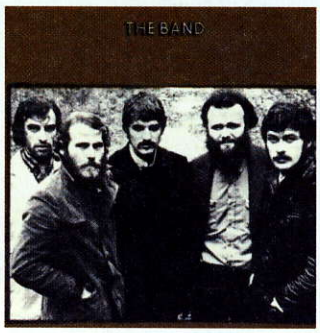
While it was virtually ignored at the time of its release, the album foretold rock music's anarchic near-future with bull's-eye accuracy: it is without a doubt the first punk album. Iggy Pop's Jim Morrison-on-crack vocal during the extended outro of "No Fun" sizzles with the manic energy of a possessed preacher, and Ron Asheton's filthy, fuzz-and-wah-drenched tone on "I Wanna Be Your Dog" is still the benchmark by which all deliberately lo-fi, shitty guitar sounds are measured.

It took a few more years to kill off all the shaggy hippies, but *The Stooges* is the album that drew first blood.

AUGUST ALBUM RELEASES

Barabajagal—Donovan
On Time—Grand Funk Railroad
Pretties for You—Alice Cooper
Santana—Santana
Stand Up—Jethro Tull

SEPTEMBER
The Band ★ THE BAND



IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT the Band—the group that turned out the memorable, literary but plain-spoken song evocations of the American experience in their 1969 self-titled second album—were four-fifths Canadian and educated in bars and honky-tonks. Then again, it's probably that combination, along with their impeccable musicianship, that helped make them so great. From long years on the road backing Arkansas rockabilly singer Ronnie Hawkins, the Band—Robbie Robertson, Levon Helm, Rick Danko, Garth Hudson and the late Richard Manuel—evolved into the most fearsomely accomplished rock and roll band in Canada. Their next backing gig, with Bob Dylan, was close to revolutionary, and after it, they were ready to step out and make their own grand musical statement. They accomplished that in spades with their 1968 debut, *Music from Big Pink*. Containing "The Weight" and "This Wheel's on Fire" and "I Shall Be Released" (both co-written with Dylan), *Big Pink* was a tough act to follow.

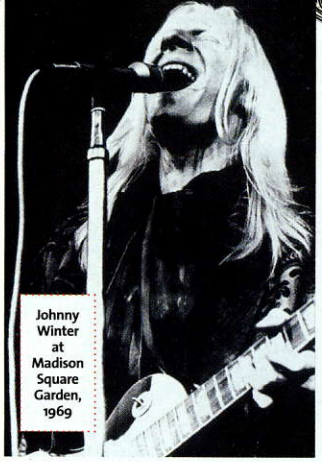
Remarkably, they returned in 1969 with a follow-up that was equally as strong. Titled simply *The Band*, it was a masterpiece that dripped with originality. Channeling a rural 19th century sensibility, tracks like "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down," "Rag, Mama, Rag" and "Up on Cripple Creek" (the Band's first and only Top 30 release) stood out from the psychedelia and politicized musical claptrap so prevalent in 1969. Anything resembling the album today would barely make a ripple, but in 1969 *The Band* rode to the No. 9 spot.

It was the Band's lead guitarist and songwriter, Robbie Robertson, who said that *The Band* could have been called *America*, not only for its rustic Americana imagery but for the diversity of musical influences represented in the songs: Robertson's blues-country guitar, Danko's Motown-inflected bass, Manuel's gospel piano, Helm's booming, offbeat drum and Hudson's eccentric and endlessly inventive keyboards and sax. Small wonder that Eric Clapton, the Band's longtime friend and admirer, said of the record, "I thought, This is it; there's a group here that has finally amalgamated all the influences—the black influences, the country influences—and put it all into one thing, with songwriting and musicianship, and this is what it's all about."

SEPTEMBER ALBUM RELEASES

Abbey Road—The Beatles
Five Leaves Left—Nick Drake
Get Down to It —James Brown
Then Play On—Fleetwood Mac

GLENN A. BAKER / REDFERNS / RETNA LTD. (THE STOOGES); GIJSBERT HANEKROOT / SUNSHINE / RETNA LTD. (THE BAND)



Johnny Winter at Madison Square Garden, 1969

OCTOBER *Johnny Winter* ★ SECOND WINTER

WHEN JOHNNY WINTER, an unknown guitar slinger from Austin, Texas, signed with Columbia in 1968 for an unheard of $600,000, people immediately wanted to know what all the fuss was about. It didn't take long for them to find out.

Described by *Rolling Stone* magazine as "a cross-eyed albino with long, fleecy hair, who plays some of the gutsiest, fluid blues guitar you've ever heard," Winter boasted a freaky appearance and stellar chops that made him the talk of the town. With its howling vocals and mercurial, stinging guitar, the Texan's debut album, 1968's *Johnny Winter*, more than lived up to the hype and made it clear that this whiter-than-white bluesman was the real deal.

But as good as his first album was, it was Winter's follow-up, 1969's *Second Winter*, that catapulted him into superstardom. Taking his cue from Jimi Hendrix's *Are You Experienced* and Cream's *Disraeli Gears*, Johnny and his red-hot rhythm section, consisting of bassist Tommy Shannon (later of Stevie Ray Vaughan's Double Trouble) and drummer "Uncle" John Turner, pumped up the volume to produce a heavier, more rock-oriented sound.

"Hendrix and Cream really inspired us," Winter remembers. "We weren't trying to copy them—they just motivated us by example."

But while such original Winter compositions as "Fast Life Rider" and the wah drenched "The Good

Love" were forceful enough, it was his blistering cover versions of Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode" and Bob Dylan's "Highway 61 Revisited" that made him a legend.

"We'd been playing 'Highway 61' in clubs, and we knew our arrangement was a killer," Winter says. Along with the playing of the Allman Brothers' Duane Allman, this electrifying slide-guitar showcase catapulted Johnny into the realm of rock's true elite.

Perhaps the most unusual thing about *Second Winter* is that it was released as a three-sided album. Packaged in a double-pocket with two discs, its second disc was blank on one side. Any self-respecting cost-conscious record label would certainly have balked at such an idea, if only because of the expense inherent in producing a double, as opposed to a single, album.

But as Winter explains with some residual amazement, "It's hard to believe, but they never complained. In fact, they thought it was a really cool idea! The liner notes explained it all. We simply wanted to put out everything we'd recorded, and what we produced filled up three sides of vinyl. So that was that."

OCTOBER ALBUM RELEASES *Arthur (Or the Decline and Fall of the British Empire)*—The Kinks *Ballad of Easy Rider*—The Byrds *Hot Rats*—Frank Zappa *In the Court of the Crimson King*—King Crimson *Led Zeppelin II*—Led Zeppelin *Ummagumma*—Pink Floyd

NOVEMBER *Captain Beefheart & His Magic Band* ★ TROUT MASK REPLICA

DENSE AS A RAIN FOREST, sometimes grating and often hard to grasp, Captain Beefheart's best-known album, *Trout Mask Replica*, is the poster boy of late-Sixties avant-garde rock. No other album from that era brought together as many disparate influences in such an utterly original, aggressively confrontational and thought-provoking manner.

The man behind this watershed album is Don Van Vliet, a.k.a. Captain Beefheart, one of the more unusual musical personalities to emerge from the Sixties rock scene. As a teenager in Lancaster, California, he befriended high school classmate Frank Zappa. Teaching himself harmonica and the saxophone while playing and recording with Zappa, Vliet spent much of the late Fifties immersed in blues standards by Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker. But it wasn't long before Vliet took a quantum leap beyond the blues, envisioning a new kind of ambitious, experimental music, one that would perfectly suit his free-associative poetry and quirky, five-octave vocal sensibility.

Beefheart signed to A&M in 1964 as a blues artist, but was quickly dropped for sounding "too negative." After 1967's *Safe as Milk*, and 1968's *Strictly Personal* Beefheart retired briefly from the music industry when the label tried to steer him in a more commercial direction. It was Zappa that pulled him back in, offering Beefheart a deal with his new spin-off label, Straight, and—more importantly—promising complete creative control. The fruit of that deal was the stunning *Trout Mask Replica*.

Featuring 28 tunes, *Trout Mask* was originally released as a double album. The album features the Magic Band's most legendary line-up: Beefheart, Zoot Horn Rollo (Bill Harkleroad), Antennae Jimmy Semens (Jeff Cotton), Rockette Morton (Mark Boston), Drumbo

Captain Beefheart in 1969

(John French), and The Mascara Snake (Victor Haydon). Assimilating the sound of hard-driving African rhythms, Appalachian folk melodies and cadences, sea shanties, Delta blues licks and free-form atonal jazz, the Magic Band provided the perfect backdrop

to Beefheart's wailing/barking/spewing stream-of-consciousness singing. The cumulative effect is an explosive assault on the senses. In later years, this music proved to be highly influential on such bands as Pere Ubu, Talking Heads, Devo and Public Image.

And what of those crazy band member names? "Zappa had given Don the name 'Captain Beefheart,'" explains Harkleroad, "so Don bestowed those of us in the Magic Band our own nicknames. I thought, Oh, whatever—I'm in the Beefheart band and this is the coolest thing on earth."

NOVEMBER ALBUM RELEASES *Let It Bleed*—The Rolling Stones *Live/Dead*—The Grateful Dead *Man of Words/Man of Music*—David Bowie *The Allman Brothers Band*—The Allman Brothers Band *Volunteers*—Jefferson Airplane *Willy and the Poor Boys*—Creedence Clearwater Revival

STEVE BANKS / RETNA (WINTER); MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES (CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & HIS MAGIC BAND)

DECEMBER *Jimi Hendrix & THE BAND OF GYPSYS make their debut*

IN MID OCTOBER OF 1965, Jimi Hendrix was just another struggling musician who occasionally had to pawn his guitar in order to eat and pay the rent. So when he was offered a contract to record with Curtis Knight and the Squires, a small-time R&B act, he jumped at the chance to sign. Little did Jimi know that the seemingly harmless one-page legal document, drawn up by record producer Ed Chalpin, was a time bomb waiting to explode.

And explode it did. Shortly after Hendrix had conquered the rock world in 1967 with *Are You Experienced*, Chalpin resurfaced. With the 1965 contract and a distribution deal with Capitol Records in hand, the producer began releasing the dismal Curtis Knight sessions as official Hendrix albums, causing mass confusion in the marketplace. Months of litigation ensued before Hendrix and Warner Bros., Jimi's U.S. label, rid themselves of the situation by agreeing to a legal settlement that required Hendrix to deliver an album of original material to Capitol Records for distribution.

While Jimi was unhappy with the decision, he was determined to make the best of a bad situation by attacking the project with a "joyous, creative posture." His first decision was to give Capitol a live album which would keep his production costs down to a minimum. Next, he chose to perform several new compositions he'd been working on, and with a completely new band. Dubbed the Band of Gypsys, the group consisted of Jimi, bassist Billy Cox, who Hendrix knew from his army days, and Buddy Miles, a powerhouse, in-the-pocket drummer who made his reputation working with R&B legend Wilson Pickett.

With the trio in place, Hendrix scheduled four concerts at New York City's Fillmore East—two on New Year's Eve 1969 and two on New Year's Day 1970. All of the shows would be recorded and the best performances would be edited for the album. While the risk of performing all-new material with only a few weeks' rehearsal was great, Hendrix clearly knew what he was doing. The music, which can be heard on *Band of Gypsys, Live at the Fillmore East*, is staggering in scope and frightening in its intensity. In fact, it can safely be said, over the course of those four shows, Jimi capped the Sixties by playing the greatest improvised guitar music in rock history.

With Cox and Miles laying down an unshakably funky foundation, the guitarist was free to roam where he wanted. While much of his playing can only be described as celestial, Jimi also took the time to dig deep into his personal heart of darkness. On the disturbing masterpiece "Machine Gun," he mounts a full-scale attack on the war in Vietnam, wrenching the sounds of bombs exploding, guns blazing and the tortured screams of women and children from his potent ax.

Chalpin and Capitol Records may have gotten their album, but they did not break Jimi's spirit or cause him to compromise his artistry. The performances, in fact, were a stunning triumph in the face of adversity. And despite the experimental nature of the music, *Band of Gypsys* would become the second-best selling album in Hendrix's catalog, surpassed only by *Electric Ladyland*.

In the March 1999 issue of *Guitar World*, Billy Cox pronounced his semi-mystical take on Hendrix and the Band of Gypsys: "Jimi's talent came from above, and, as a musician, he was just a vessel. I was a recipient of the musical spirit that flowed through him, and we rode that musical energy together."

Although the Fillmore East concerts showed so much promise and musical energy, the Band of Gypsys fell apart within a month. Jimi Hendrix died later that year after swallowing a combination of alcohol and barbiturates. *GL*

Hendrix at the Royal Albert Hall, London, February 24, 1969

DAVID REDFERN / REDFERNS / RETNA LTD.

DECEMBER ALBUM RELEASES

Grand Funk—Grand Funk Railroad

The '70s

*With **BLACK SABBATH, LED ZEPPELIN, QUEEN** and **KISS** at the height of their powers, it's no wonder this is remembered as the "classic" rock era.*

AFTER THE GREAT PSYCHEDELIC love fest of the late Sixties, there was an explosion of rock subgenres. The early Seventies saw the birth of glam, progressive rock, fusion, southern boogie, mellow country rock and, of course, heavy metal. Rock critics of the day—not to mention devotees of glam, prog, fusion and so on—regarded metal as Neanderthal and moronic. Time has proven the critics were right, but it has also shown metal to be the most enduring of rock-based styles. (And who listens to critics anyway?)

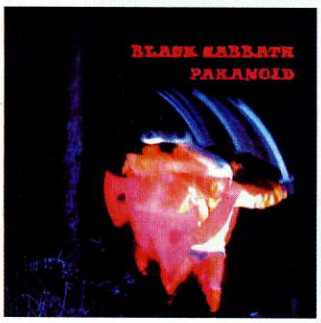
The roots of Seventies metal lay in late-Sixties power trios, such as Cream, the Jimi Hendrix Experience and Blue Cheer. The genre's name probably came from the phrase "heavy metal thunder" in Steppenwolf's 1967 hit, "Born to be Wild." That same year, psychedelic act Iron Butterfly named their debut album *Heavy*, making perhaps the first explicit connection between the word and a specific rock sound (though it should be noted that jazzbos had been calling their own music "heavy" for years before rock and rollers appropriated the term).

By the time the Seventies got underway, dozens of bands were taking a "heavy" approach to playing rock, including Led Zeppelin (whose name, like their music, upped the ante on Iron Butterfly), Deep Purple, Black Sabbath, Uriah Heep, Humble Pie, Aerosmith, Mountain, Grand Funk Railroad, Blue Öyster Cult, Judas Priest and the Scorpions. The emphasis was on high-pitched vocals, "unison" riffing—with guitar and bass running the same pentatonic scales in different octaves—and plenty of six-string histrionics.

By mid decade, a rich and varied hard rock scene had developed. Old vets like the Who were not only hanging in there but also doing some of their most exciting work. Alice Cooper and Kiss introduced makeup to metal, Heart pioneered chick metal and former Amboy Dukes guitarist Ted Nugent was launching the gonzo-style of American dumb-rock that lives on today via acts like Kid Rock and Hellyeah. Motörhead, AC/DC and Van Halen were on the horizon (but then so was Ronald Reagan).

But the mid Seventies also gave birth to a style of rock that was, in many ways, the antithesis of metal. Punk rock shared the loud guitar aggression of metal (as did its more sociable cousin, power pop), but the tempo was much brisker.

Black Sabbath circa 1970



Blues riffs and showy guitar solos were frowned upon, and the scene was marked by a completely different look and lyrical sensibility. By the end of the Seventies, punk and metal had become rival claimants to rock's loud legacy. It has been that way ever since.

It's that varied mix of Seventies-era musicians and styles that is represented in the following list. Join us as we look at some of the decade's classic rock milestones and the stories behind their creation.

PARANOID (1970)

BLACK SABBATH

MUCH OF WHAT EVERYONE loves, and hates, about heavy metal can be traced directly to Black Sabbath. Guitarist Tony Iommi was the first to tune his guitar down to E♭, D and even C♯, creating the ominously dark and sludgy sound that became Sabbath's aural signature and later empowered the grunge and rap metal revolutions of the Nineties.

And singer Ozzy Osbourne was the first to write lyrics on satanic themes. While this kind of thing later became a great cause of concern for Bible-thumping alarmists and other right-wing conservatives, it was pretty much accepted as another bit of rock and roll shtick back in the "anything goes" early Seventies. At its core wasn't much more than a healthy working-class contempt for the hippie utopianism that had dominated late-Sixties rock.

"Black Sabbath were never really 100 percent a satanic band," Ozzy says, "although we did touch on topics like Satanism and devil worship in certain songs. It was just a different angle. If you think back to the late Sixties and early Seventies, it was all fuckin' flower power and how wonderful the world is. That just didn't seem true to us. The world was fucked."

Most elements of Sabbath's approach were in place on their 1970 debut album, but things really came into focus on their second disc, *Paranoid*, released the same year. Although the album was recorded in just a few days, it has stood the test of time as a metal classic. It was originally going to be titled *War Pigs*, after the opening track. But when the song "Paranoid" became a U.K. top-five hit, the album's name was hastily changed. By any name, it's one of rock's defining albums.

LED ZEPPELIN IV (1971)

LED ZEPPELIN

LED ZEPPELIN PLAYED a huge role in ushering in the hard-rock era at the dawn of the Seventies. Their first two albums went a long way toward establishing their mastery of riff-heavy, blues-inflected rock music. They took a surprising acoustic turn on their third album—a move that met with grudging acceptance at best among hard rock audiences of the day.

All of which put them in a tricky position as they entered the studio to make their fourth album. To return exclusively to the heavy blues rock of their first two albums would be a step backward—an admission of defeat. But to soldier on with another predominantly acoustic album would be courting commercial disaster.

Their solution was to combine both approaches in what proved to be a compelling new hybrid. Many consider Led Zeppelin's fourth album to be the group's finest effort ever. Its legendary status is enhanced by the fact that it doesn't have a proper title—just four mysterious symbols taken from the band members' interest in the occult and arcane mythology. Led Zeppelin's name was deliberately left off the original sleeve as well.

The album starts and ends in Zep's amped-up blues vein. Kicking the disc off is the itchy, lustful "Black Dog," which slides into the jackhammer drive of "Rock and Roll." And the album closes with the group's apocalyptic reading of Memphis Minnie's "When the Levee Breaks." These three tracks alone contain scores of the most imitated sounds in rock, including John Bonham's massive drum sound on "Levee," which was achieved by placing his kit at the foot of a lofty staircase at Headley Grange, the stately old English manor house where Led Zeppelin often recorded.

But an entirely different mood sets in on the album's third number, the wistful, mandolin-driven "Battle of Evermore." The lyrics were based on the popular Hobbit novels of British scholar and author J.R.R. Tolkien. All these strains—the heaviness, the folkiness and the old-English lyrical whimsy—come together in the album's best-known song, the epic "Stairway to Heaven." "That number gave us the musical respectability we deserved all along," Jimmy Page later noted.

Deep Purple in the studio in the early Seventies

The finished recording realized Page's original ambitions—and then some. "Stairway" is the most-requested record in the history of commercial radio. Like the mysterious lady in Plant's lyric, the song and album have ascended into the misty heights of rock legend.

MACHINE HEAD (1972)

DEEP PURPLE

MACHINE HEAD WAS A LINE in the sand for Deep Purple. It marked the end of the band's early dabblings in throwaway pop, its bizarre partnership with the London Philharmonic Orchestra (as seen on 1970's *Concerto for Group and Orchestra*) and the funky experimental-

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES (BLACK SABBATH); MICHAEL PUTLAND / RETNA LTD (DEEP PURPLE)

ism of 1971's *Fireball*, and it signified the start of Deep Purple's new life as a hard rock act. *Machine Head* mined the same territory as 1970's *Deep Purple in Rock* but with added grit and swagger. It was the arrival of the Purps as the world would come to know them.

The lineup of guitarist Ritchie Blackmore, singer Ian Gillan, bassist Roger Glover, drummer Ian Paice and keyboardist Jon Lord had an almost telepathic musical relationship on *Machine Head*. Recorded in just over three weeks, the album was a cocktail of ideas and attitude, the songwriting of Glover and Gillan dovetailing with the virtuosity of Blackmore, Lord and Paice.

Machine Head was scheduled to be recorded at the Montreux Casino in Switzerland, but this plan was foiled by the famous fire that both destroyed the venue and inspired "Smoke on the Water," the album's most celebrated cut. Armed only with a mobile studio, the band and engineer Martin Birch set up their gear in the lobby of Montreux's Grand Hotel, which was closed for the winter, positioning the recording truck at the entrance so its cables could snake through the building.

Despite these conditions, or because of them, the music that Deep Purple laid down was the best of their career. Blackmore was firing on all cylinders on "Highway Star" and "Pictures of Home," and Lord's organ lines—fed through a Marshall stack for added menace—were particularly powerful on "Space Truckin'."

Released in March 1972, *Machine Head* reached No. 7 on the U.S. charts and hit the top spot in the U.K. charts. While it felt like the start of something, it was, in fact, the beginning of the end. Though Purple produced other great albums with different lineups, they would never scale these heights again.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA (1975)

QUEEN

THE AVERAGE EARLY Seventies metalhead wasn't quite comfortable with cross-dressing and sexual ambiguity. Thus, glam and metal were two separate worlds before Queen came along. They were the first group to have success combining the two genres, thanks in no small part to the aggressive, hard rock guitar stylings of Queen axman Brian May. An idiosyncratic and brilliantly inventive guitarist, May played a homemade solidbody guitar—his beloved Red Special—through a wall of Vox AC30 amps. In the studio, Queen and producer Roy Thomas Baker developed a technique for overdubbing guitar and vocal tracks several times to create elaborate, layered orchestrations.

Gene Simmons onstage with Kiss in Amsterdam, May 23, 1976

May's unique sound proved the perfect foil for singer Freddie Mercury's flamboyant stage act and stunning vocal acumen. This combination—plus the solid rhythm section of John Deacon and Roger Taylor—made rock fans take notice of Queen's first three albums.

But their fourth disc, *A Night at the Opera*, put them in another league entirely. Mercury's camp proclivities run wild on tracks like "Seaside Rendezvous" and "Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon," and May's stacked guitar orchestrations reach monumental heights on "The Prophet's Song" and "God Save the Queen."

But the album's centerpiece is the five-minute, 55-second, "Bohemian Rhapsody," a pseudo-operatic opus that manages to be both hilarious and awe-inspiring. The histrionics of grand opera ideally suited the mid-Seventies vogue for hard rock bombast and Mercury's own penchant for stagey melodrama. "Bohemian Rhapsody" was Mercury's composition, and the singer took a leading role in getting the song's various sections down on tape.

"The whole thing was Freddie's baby," Brian May recalls. "We just helped him bring it to life."

Several years after *A Night at the Opera*, Queen lost some of their hardcore metal following when Freddie Mercury came out of the closet. But by that point, Queen had transcended questions of sexual identity or musical genre to become one of the best-loved bands of the entire rock era. By uniting glam and metal, Queen set the stage for the hair band explosion of the Eighties.

PHYSICAL GRAFFITI (1975)

LED ZEPPELIN

DARING, SPRAWLING AND enthusiastically eccentric, *Physical Graffiti* is one of the most beloved of all Led Zeppelin albums and also the most misunderstood. To many, its synthesis of funk and Eastern music into Zeppelin's Hammer of the Gods thunder is the sound of a band realizing there are no limits to its powers. To others, the album is dense and frustrating, stuffed with filler. By any measure, it's an artistic gamble, full of detours and moments of supreme triumph and quirky experimentation. But as guitarist Jimmy Page has said, "It just made sense for it to be a double. There may have been double and even triple albums by other bands at the time, but I didn't really care, because ours was going to be better than any of them."

Although the bulk of *Physical Graffiti* resulted from recording sessions at Headley Grange in 1974, some of the tracks had been waiting for a home for years, having been recorded during sessions for *Led Zeppelin III* ("Bron-Yr-Aur"), *Led Zeppelin IV* ("Night Flight" and "Boogie with Stu") and *Houses of the Holy* (The Rover" and "Black Country Woman"). Despite such gaps in time, the tracks, once assembled in a playing order, seemed to meld together as if by some grand, magical design.

But *Physical Graffiti's* signature

COVERT DE ROOS / RETNA LTD. (KISS)

track is the wondrous "Kashmir." With Page's tense, unyielding DADGAD chord pattern, John Paul Jones' "Arabian string symphony," John Bonham's steady 4/4 beat against the 3/4 riff, and Plant's surrealistic lyrics, the song is a spellbinding monolith that sends tendrils of anxiety in all directions. In many ways, it distills the essence of Led Zeppelin: dramatic, epic, bewitching and fiery till the end.

DESTROYER (1976)

KISS

DESTROYER IS THE ALBUM that established Kiss as superstars, but for that to happen, the band had to be willing to demolish its old ways of doing things. At the time, Kiss were under tremendous pressure to have not just a hit but a smash. The album's predecessor, *Alive!* had been a runaway success, with blistering live versions of the band's best songs, including "Deuce," "Strutter" and "Rock and Roll All Nite." For their follow-up, Kiss knew they needed the strongest material they could come up with if they wanted to hold onto what they'd achieved. They also needed a cheerleader and a guru who would push them to musical greatness. Enter Bob Ezrin, the Canadian-born producer who had already made a name for himself producing Alice Cooper.

In making their first three albums, Kiss had simply written the songs, then gone into the studio to record them before heading out on tour. But in Ezrin's world, the recording process was preceded by "preproduction." "Actually, brutal boot camp is more like it," says guitarist Paul Stanley. "Bob definitely had a whistle round his neck."

Not only did the Toronto-born taskmaster insist that the band members learn to tune their own instruments, he also arranged them in a circle, with the band running choruses, verses and bridges up the flagpole in the hope of an Ezrin salute. Only a couple of songs were nearly completed at the time Ezrin joined the sessions: "God of Thunder" and "Detroit Rock City," which, though solid in the chorus, still needed a lyrical theme. The song's turning point came when Stanley told Ezrin about a show where a fan had been killed by a car outside the venue. The producer encouraged Stanley to complete the lyric, making it a story about a kid who hears about his own demise. "God of Thunder," meanwhile, was to prove a double-edged sword for Stanley. Though he had written it for himself to sing, Ezrin decided bassist Gene Simmons should take the lead vocal, and it swiftly became Simmons' signature tune.

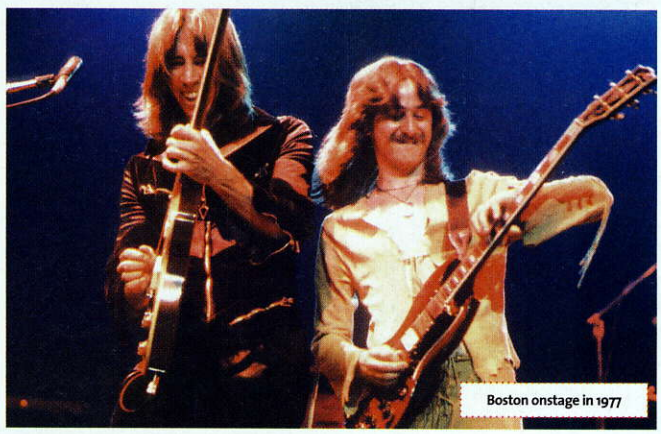
The album's big surprise, however, was "Beth," a grandiose orchestral power ballad penned by drummer Peter Criss and given a serious sprinkling of fairy dust by Ezrin. Originally the B-side of "Detroit Rock City," the song became a hit in its own right.

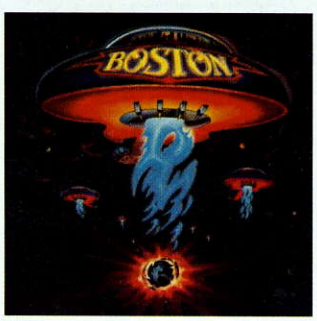
Yet for all his influence over Kiss, Ezrin could not persuade them to give the album a different name. "He thought *Destroyer* sounded negative," says Stanley. "But for me it was too good not to use."

BOSTON (1976)

BOSTON

WHEN BOSTON'S SELF-TITLED debut album was released in fall 1976, few industry insiders thought that a guitar-heavy rock record could make much of a dent in the charts, much less become the best-selling debut of all time. "Everybody thought that it was impossible, because disco ruled the airwaves at the time," recalls Boston leader Tom Scholz. "But we stumbled onto a sound that worked, and soon everybody was imitating it."


Boston onstage in 1977



It may have been unlikely that an album dominated by brawny riffs, harmonized guitar leads and multilayered vocal workouts would capture the imagination of America's bell-bottomed youth. What was positively bizarre was the source of this blockbuster. Scholz was a gangly project manager for Polaroid, with a Master's degree from M.I.T. in engineering, who spent his off hours writing and recording in his basement. "I was basically a dork," he says. "But somehow I ended up onstage, playing guitar in front of everybody else."

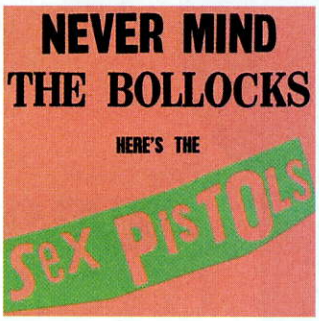
It's likely this very dorkiness—along with the fact that Boston vocalist Brad Delp had a golden voice with a staggering range—that engendered Boston's success. Who but a dyed-in-the-wool braniac could compose, arrange, record and perform most of the guitar, keyboard and bass parts on an album—in his basement no less—and produce such powerful results? Even 30 years after its original release, *Boston* is still widely regarded as one of the best-sounding rock albums of all time, and when tracks like "More Than a Feeling" and "Rock and Roll Band" come on the radio, few can resist indulging in fits of fleet-fingered air guitar and a spirited falsetto sing-along.

NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS, HERE'S THE SEX PISTOLS (1977)

THE SEX PISTOLS

IN LATE-SEVENTIES AMERICA, punk rock was seen as a threat to bad, boring, self-indulgent corporate rock. But in England, punk was regarded as a very real menace to home, family, government, the crown and every other sacred institution of British society.

The Sex Pistols personified that threat. They insulted the monarchy, said obscene words on TV and got bounced off two major record labels in a matter of weeks. Sex Pistols gigs were banned in many English towns. Singer Johnny "Rotten" Lydon and drummer Paul Cook had been attacked at knifepoint on the streets of London by reactionary thugs who took exception to singles like "Anarchy in the U.K." and "God Save the Queen." By early 1977, relations within the band were strained and chaotic, too. The Pistols had



fired their original bassist, Glen Matlock, and taken on Sid Vicious, who could barely play his instrument and was rapidly developing a serious drug problem that would lead to his death two years later.

In the midst of all the furor, the Sex Pistols somehow managed to hone their one and only studio album to razor-sharp perfection. Most of the songs had already been demoed twice by the time the band entered the studio to cut *Bollocks* with producer Chris Thomas, who had worked on the Beatles' "White Album" and Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*. He and Rotten didn't always see eye to eye, but Thomas got an incredibly punchy and aggressive sound from drummer Paul Cook and guitarist Steve Jones, who performed on a Les Paul that once belonged to the New York Dolls and a Fender Twin Reverb that Jones had stolen from Bob Marley.

While Sid Vicious has become one of punk's most enduring icons, he played very little, or perhaps not at all, on *Never Mind the Bollocks*. Most of the bass parts were overdubbed by Jones. "Sid got hepatitis and had to go into hospital for a few weeks," Jones says. "Which was a godsend, really, because he was always fucked up and couldn't play."

The Sex Pistols broke up shortly after *Never Mind the Bollocks* was released. But the band and the album continue to exert a tremendous influence on rock. "The songs still stand," Lydon says. "I haven't heard anybody come anywhere near it." *GL*

MICHAEL PUTLAND / RETNA LTD. (BOSTON)

Brick by

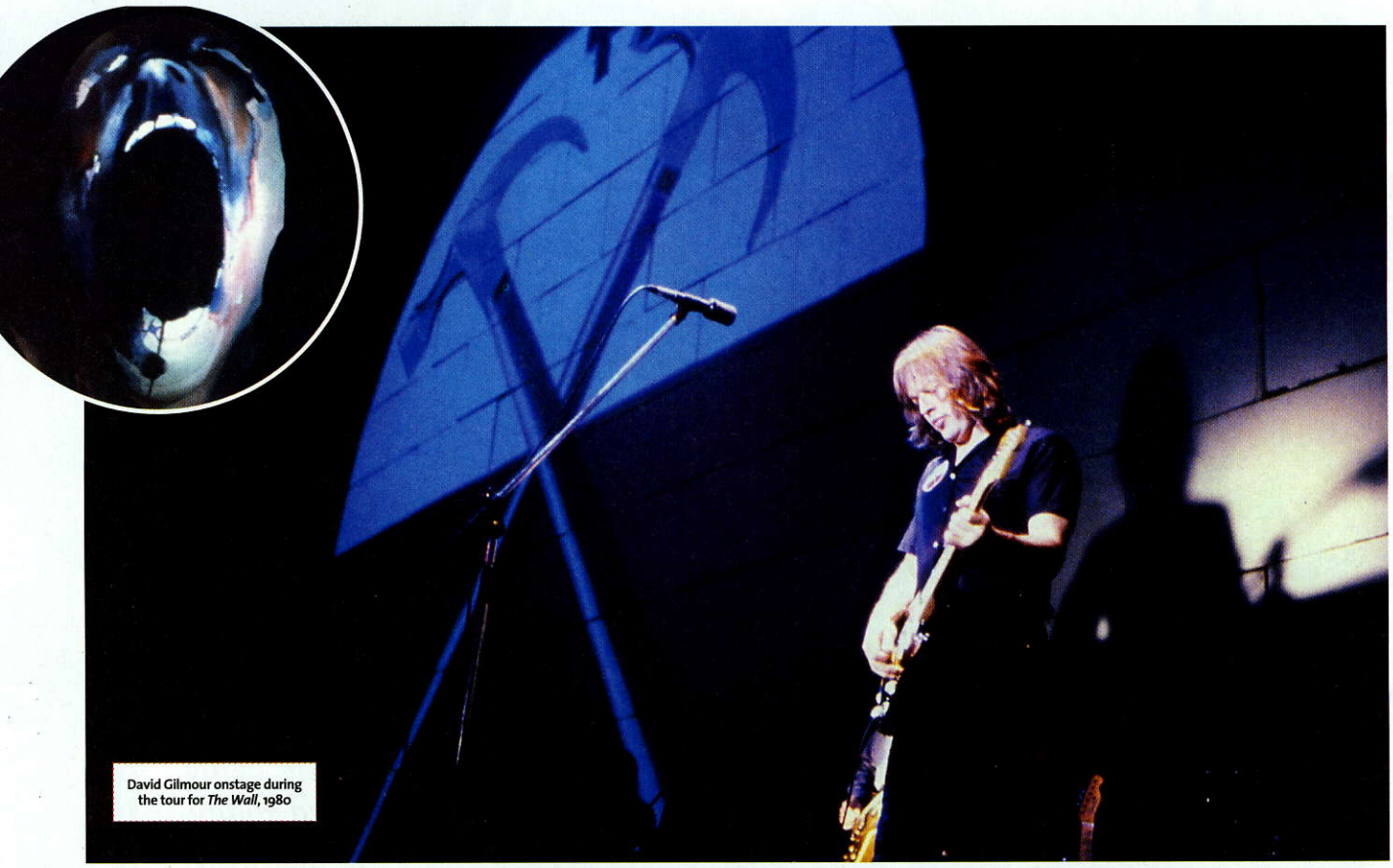
Pink Floyd at the Los Angeles Sports Arena, 1980

Brick

Thirty years ago, ***PINK FLOYD*** *built The Wall, an achievement that is still being celebrated today. In the following comprehensive history, Guitar Legends chronicles the making of rock's grandest concept album and how it nearly destroyed its creators.*

by Alan di Perna

NEAL PRESTON/CORBIS



David Gilmour onstage during the tour for *The Wall*, 1980

"I **ACTUALLY STILL HAVE THE DRAWING** at home," says Roger Waters, recalling the first of countless sketches he made for Pink Floyd's opus, *The Wall*. The idea came to Waters in 1977. "Sitting on a plane, or in a bar somewhere," he remembers, "I got a piece of paper and drew a picture of this wall [*running*] across an arena, with a stage. When I did that I got very excited; I thought, Wow, what a great piece of theater it would be to do that—to actually construct a wall between the band and audience during a concert."

WATERS' CONCEPT TURNED out to be much more than an interesting piece of rock theater. Since its release, *The Wall* has sold more than 23 million units, making it the third biggest-selling album of all time. It spawned one of the largest, most elaborate stage productions ever mounted in rock—so large, in fact, that the show could only run for a handful of performances in four cities and all but bankrupted the band in the process.

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

LIKE MOST MUSICAL monuments, *The Wall* was not built overnight. By the late Seventies, Pink Floyd had been through more than a decade's worth of trials and triumphs and were on the verge of collapse from within. One of Britain's first psychedelic bands, they'd arisen out of the mid-Sixties Swinging London scene and had managed to survive the descent into madness and subsequent departure of their original leader, the brilliant guitarist, singer and songwriter Syd Barrett.

The void Barrett left was partly filled in 1968 by David Gilmour, who was to prove one of the most distinctive guitar stylists of the rock era. Joining forces with founding Pink Floyd members Roger Waters (bass/vocals), Rick Wright (keyboards) and Nick Mason (drums), Gilmour helped launch Pink Floyd's second incarnation. With albums like *Dark Side of the Moon* (1973), *Wish You Were Here* (1975) and *Animals* (1977), the four men established themselves as the Seventies' premier space-rock band, noted for their cosmic extended instrumental jams, evocative sonic textures and increasingly elaborate stage shows. Over the years, however, the band became less of a jam-based collective and more of a vehicle for Waters, who had come into his own as Pink Floyd's major thinker. Waters' ideas had played a leading role in shaping *Dark Side, Wish* and *Animals* into multi-dimensional concept albums and in making opulent spectacles of Pink Floyd's live concerts, which featured increasingly elaborate stage props, such as the infamous 40-foot inflatable pig devised for the *Animals* tour.

But Waters' ascendancy had created no small amount of bad feeling between himself and his bandmates, who tended to view the bassist as an increasingly tyrannical control freak. Friction between Waters and Gilmour grew particularly intense, as both men vied, in very different ways, to fill Syd Barrett's shoes—Gilmour through guitaristic prowess and melodic songcraft, and Waters through boldly experimental concepts.

Born in a psychological war zone, *The Wall* strained Pink Floyd to the breaking point.

FRANK WHITE (GILMOUR); MGM / PHOTOFEST / RETNA

It proved to be the last Pink Floyd album recorded by the full Waters/Gilmour/Wright/Mason lineup and Waters' penultimate project with the group.

"There's always been tension," Gilmour says of his relationship with Waters. "But it was all quite controllable until after the *Wall* album. There's such a thing as creative tension. And then there's total egocentric, megalomaniac tension, if you like."

IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?

THERE WERE OTHER tensions in the air at the time of *The Wall*'s creation—tensions within rock music itself. By the late Seventies, the punk rock revolution had heaped much invective on the decade's big stadium-rock bands such as Pink Floyd. Punk moved rock music back into small clubs, which permitted a closer connection between bands and their audiences. Punk ideologues honed in on Pink Floyd's inflatable pig prop, in particular, as a symbol of the bloated, foolish thing corporate rock had become.

What few punk rockers realized at the time is that Roger Waters had come to the exact same conclusion himself. As Pink Floyd had moved from small psychedelic venues like London's UFO club into larger and larger arenas and stadiums, Waters had come to feel increasingly alienated and isolated from concert audiences.

"It was magical in the early days of Floyd," he says. "But the magic was eaten by the numbers. Until, by '77, when we were doing the *Animals* tour—playing only big stadiums and selling out everywhere—all everyone was talking about was grosses and numbers and how many people there were in the house. And you could hardly hear yourself think. You could hardly hear anything [*onstage*] because there were so many drunk people in the stadium, all shouting and screaming."

The situation reached a crisis point during a Pink Floyd concert at Olympic Stadium in Montreal, where Waters spat at an especially obnoxious fan. Appalled by his own behavior, the bassist began to ponder how things had ever come to such a pass that he could feel actual hostility toward a member of his audience. Shortly after the Montreal incident, Waters came up with the aforementioned drawing of a gigantic wall, a barrier between performers and spectators.

The incredible power of the image Waters chose lies in its simplicity and universality. It is an ancient, quasi-mystical symbol that comes down to us from the dark recesses of Biblical and classical antiquity. Writers from Melville to Sartre have used the wall image as a symbol of alienation. It has become particularly identified with the feeling of existentialist isolation unique to the post-WWII era—the latter half of the 20th century. In this epoch, we all live behind walls—political, psychological, social, self-imposed or otherwise. In applying this rich motif to rock—the great, late 20th century populist art form—Waters found the basis for the most ambitious project of his career. In the past, he'd played an important role in creating concept albums for Pink Floyd. But now he envisioned a concept album that would also form the basis for a series of concert performances and a feature film.

"I needed to construct the whole piece," Waters says. "So I started thinking, Well, what is this wall, and what's it made from? Then the idea started to occur to me that the individual bricks might be from different aspects of the history of my life and other people's lives. And I started to fit things together."

Back at his country home, Waters began writing songs for what would become *The Wall*. He put together a demo tape "that was only 43 minutes long, or something like that," he recalls. During the same period he worked up a rough demo for another project, *The Pros and Cons of Hitch Hiking*, which would eventually become his first solo album.

Initially, however, both projects were presented to the other members of Pink Floyd. Waters invited them to choose which of the two demos they wanted to make into the next Pink Floyd album. They opted, of course, to do *The Wall*.

At this juncture, the band was on the brink of bankruptcy, owing to some ill-advised business investments. They desperately needed another best-selling Pink Floyd album, on the order of *Dark Side of the Moon* or *Animals*. It has been widely speculated that Pink Floyd might not have stayed together to make *The Wall* had they not been in such dire financial straits. The situation being what it was, Gilmour, Wright and Mason joined forces with Waters to make what would become a fittingly grand last hurrah for Seventies rock, and a record that would set the stage for Waters and the other group members to go their separate ways in the Eighties. It was deemed necessary, however, to bring in an outside producer—rock vet Bob Ezrin—to work on *The Wall*. Ezrin's role, in part, was to act as a mediator, particularly between Waters and Gilmour.

"It was, for the most part, a typically British polite enmity that existed between them," Ezrin recollects. "They were obviously close on many levels. And there was an unadmitted mutual respect beneath all the arguing and bickering going on between them. But the tension was always present because there was a war between two basically dominant personalities. Each one had a need to express himself in his own style. And sometimes these styles were very different. Sometimes they approached the same piece of material from an entirely different point of view. So my job was often to be Henry Kissinger and run back and forth between the two of them, trying to arrive at a workable middle ground."

A frame from an animated sequence in the 1982 film version of *The Wall*

MGM / PHOTOFEST / RETNA (THE WALL)

EMPTY SPACES

PERHAPS BEST KNOWN, at the time, for his production work with Alice Cooper and Kiss, Ezrin had also produced Peter Gabriel's first solo album (a particular favorite of Waters') and had helped bring Lou Reed's bleak, difficult concept album *Berlin* into being. Before sessions for *The Wall* began, Ezrin spent some time with Waters, massaging the plot line. "I went and spent a weekend with him and reviewed his original demo," says the producer. "In there were the germs for I'd say half the songs that ended up appearing on the final album. From that, we refined the plot line and developed a slightly different story from the original one that Roger had. We filled in holes, the way you do with a movie script, and built the album around the story."

One of Ezrin's suggestions was to change *The Wall* from a

first-person narrative in Waters' own voice to a third-person story focusing on a character named Pink Floyd. (This name comes from a long-standing joke about the band's early days, when they'd turn up at gigs and be asked by club management, "Okay, which one of you is Pink, then?") Pink's father, an RAF fighter pilot, dies in WWII when the boy is still in infancy. In the piece, war functions as a metaphor for what corporate rock had, in Waters' view, become. Touring rock bands are like soldiers wearily slogging from one town to the next, "doing their duty" for their corporate superior officers back at record company HQ. The indignities suffered by stadium rock concertgoers—festival-seating stampedes, deafening P.A. systems—are likened to the sufferings visited on victims of war. All this might seem a bit of an over-exaggeration. Or perhaps not, depending on how many stadium rock concerts one has attended.

As the plot unfolds, we see that smothering, overprotective love from Pink's mother impedes the boy's psychological development. He begins to erect a mental barrier—a wall—between himself and the outside world. As he grows to manhood, he is further traumatized by a sadistic schoolmaster (emblematic of the repressive British public school system) and the infidelity of his wife. Each of these bad experiences is "another brick in the wall," causing Pink to withdraw ever further into himself. All of this, however, doesn't prevent Pink from becoming a rock star, although his rise to fame is not depicted in the story—a curious narrative omission.

By midpoint in the piece (the end of the first disc), Pink has become totally alienated from the outside world. The wall he'd begun erecting in childhood is now complete. Isolated in a solipsistic inner world, he becomes prey to "the worms": his own anxieties, doubts and fears. After receiving an injection to rouse him from his catatonic state so he can perform onstage (the subject matter of "Comfortably Numb"), a strange transformation comes over Pink. He turns into a quasi-Nazi. His concert performance that evening takes the form of a fascist rally, with Pink singling out "queers," Jews and "coons" in the audience, singing "If I had my way, I'd have you all shot" ("In the Flesh").

With this rather strong metaphor, which some have found in questionable taste, Waters is dramatizing the feelings that led him to spit on the audience member at the '77 Montreal show. But if Pink is hard on his fans, he's even harder on himself. The final scenes of *The Wall* take the form of a trial enacted within Pink's own psyche. A "worm judge" presides. The sadistic schoolmaster and faithless wife return as witnesses who testify against Pink. The verdict is to tear down the wall Pink has built around himself. But the ending is ambiguous. Is the wall's collapse a good thing—a return to reality for the troubled Pink? Or is it a bad thing—a further trauma for the already unbalanced protagonist?

The final lines of the piece sound a note of sympathy for those close to Pink. (The same ones who drove him crazy in the first place?) For them, "it's not always easy banging your heart against some mad bugger's wall" ("Outside the Wall").

As far as plot is concerned, it's hard not to notice *The Wall*'s many similarities to an earlier rock opus, the Who's *Tommy* (1969), which also formed the basis for a double album, a rock concert performance, a film and—years later—a stage play. Tommy, like Pink, has a British fighter pilot for a father, and as *Tommy* opens, we learn that the protagonist's father is missing in action, presumed dead, in the war (WWI in the album version, WWII in the film). Also like Pink, Tommy withdraws into himself as a result of psychological pressures brought to bear by his mother. Pink becomes a rock star. Tommy becomes a messianic guru, not unlike a rock star. Tommy and Pink both turn authoritarian on their followers toward the end of their respective stories. Pink undergoes an awakening of sorts when a wall is torn down. Tommy undergoes a similar jolt to consciousness when a mirror is smashed.

Waters' plot gets few points, if any, for originality. But what sets *The Wall* apart from *Tommy* is its tone. *Tommy* is much lighter in mood, reflecting the spiritual aspirations of its author, Pete Townshend, as much as his doubts about rock stardom. Pink's alienated psyche is a hellish, worm-infested place. Tommy's isolation is "a quiet vibration land," a quasi-meditative state of peace and stillness. The villains in *Tommy*—Cousin Kevin, Uncle Ernie, etc.—are

Waters soundchecking at Earls Court, in London

EVENING STANDARD/GETTY IMAGES

presented with a note of broad, albeit dark, comedy. But there's nothing funny about Pink's tormentors. They have the cruel stench of real human beings.

It's no secret that Waters was profoundly influenced by the raw, painfully confessional approach that John Lennon had pursued on his first solo album, *Plastic Ono Band* (1971). Much like Lennon, Waters was traumatized by the early death of a parent. And unlike Pete Townshend, Waters' father really did die in the Second World War.

"When I was three or four," Waters recalls, "suddenly there were these men in uniform picking the other kids up from kindergarten. My father was missing in action. So there was always that feeling of 'maybe one day...' You know? I've written lots of poetry about that, apart from all this stuff in *The Wall*. I think that is maybe one of the things that makes people performers. I think it engenders in you a tendency to jump through hoops. 'Maybe if I jump through this hoop, my dad will come back.' I know it sounds crazy. But I really think that.

"A few years ago I had a kind of enlightening moment in my therapeutic process: I suddenly was able to explain dreams that I had had periodically throughout my life. I used to have this very vivid, recurring dream that I'd murdered somebody and I was going to get caught, get punished, whatever. And I came to the realization that, on some subconscious level, I felt that I had killed my father. I was born and he died. I haven't had the dream ever since that realization. So I don't know—maybe that whole experience has provided me with part of whatever it is one needs to empathize. That's partly why a lot of my work focuses on the impotence of the innocent victim."

It is this aspect of *The Wall* that speaks most urgently to the post-grunge generation of rock fans. Korn, for instance, hit a tremendously responsive chord in its young audience by dealing with the early-life psychological traumas and purported childhood abuse of band leader Jonathan Davis. The image of a child's battered cuddly toy used in the cover art for Korn's 1999 album, *Issues*, bears an uncanny resemblance to a similar image that graphic artist Gerald Scarfe created 20 years earlier for *The Wall*'s album jacket and motion picture animation. Consciously or not, Marilyn Manson also seemed to borrow heavily from *The Wall* on his *Antichrist Superstar* album. A "worm" motif figures prominently in that work. And its protagonist also develops a Nazi alter ego, just like Pink. In fact, the album's cover photo of Antichrist Superstar in Nazi-style regalia is strikingly similar to the costume, makeup and hairstyle used by Bob Geldof during the "fascist rally" scenes in the film version of *The Wall*.

JON SIEVERT/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

BRING THE BOYS BACK HOME

AROUND APRIL 1979, the members of Pink Floyd did a little recording for *The Wall* at their own studio, Britannia Row, in England. But after a few sessions they were informed by management that, owing to tax issues stemming from their recent financial difficulties, they would have to make the album outside of England. So the quartet moved operations to Superbear studios in France and then completed the album at Producers Workshop in Los Angeles. The album was still only partially written when sessions got underway.

"Some things were kind of complete on the original demo," Waters recalls, "including 'Waiting for the Worms,' 'Mother,' 'Another Brick in the Wall,' parts 1, 2 and 3 and 'Is There Anybody Out There.' A lot of the stuff obviously developed after that. I remember sitting in a room while the tracks were being recorded and writing 'In the Flesh,' 'Nobody Home' and 'Comfortably Numb.' "

> *"On some subconscious level, I felt that I had killed my father. I was born and he died."*
> —Roger Waters

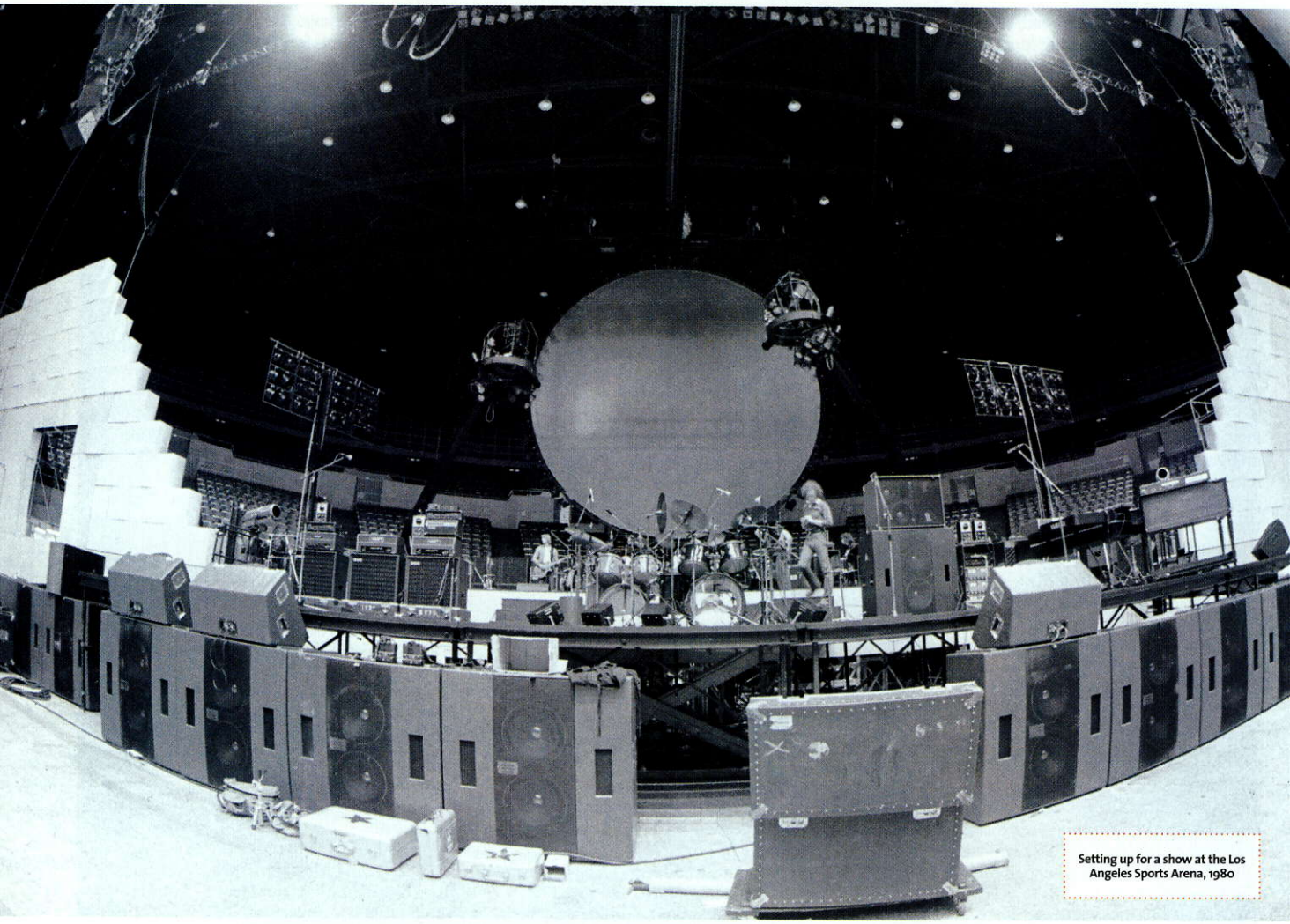
The latter song, one of the best-known and -loved pieces from *The Wall*, marks one of David Gilmour's few songwriting collaborations with Waters on the album. (He also co-wrote "Run Like Hell" and "Young Lust.")

"Bob Ezrin's desire was to make *The Wall* a Pink Floyd record rather than Roger's solo record," Gilmour recalls. "Roger wanted it to be all his solo project; he didn't want anyone else to contribute to the writing. But Bob thought there should be other people's writing on the album. So he said to me, 'What have you got?' And I played him my demo for 'Run Like Hell' and what became 'Comfortably Numb.' Bob said, 'Oh, they're really nice. We should include them.' Roger said, 'Well...alright.' It was a long hard process making that record: throwing bits away, tough editing, going to meetings..."

A brilliant evocation of the narcotized, desensitized, late-20th century consumerist malaise we all live in, "Comfortably Numb" combines the best of Waters' lyrical incisiveness with some of Gilmour's finest music. It is one of several songs on *The Wall* to employ a lush orchestral arrangement, written by Ezrin and composer Michael Kamen, which further enhances Gilmour's musical themes. Though few in number, Gilmour's songwriting contributions to *The Wall* impart a welcome element of melodicism. They contrast effectively with Waters' own compositions, many of which are sung in a style that Waters developed especially to portray the character Pink—a crabbed, stagily strident set of vocal mannerisms a bit reminiscent of the Kurt Weill/Bertolt Brecht operas of 1920s Berlin. When "Comfortably Numb" comes along, midway through *The Wall*'s second disc, its effect is not unlike that of an operatic aria—a burst of sublime melody that momentarily lifts the listener out of the creaking mechanics of plot development. The chord progression and some melodic elements for "Comfortably Numb" came from a song idea that Gilmour had developed for his first solo album, *David Gilmour* (1978), the guitarist discloses:

"I'd recorded a demo of it when I was at Superbear studios previously, doing my first solo album. We changed the key of the opening section from E to B, I think. Then we had to add a couple of extra bars so Roger could do the line, 'I have become comfortably numb.' But other than that, it was very simple to write. And it was all done before the orchestration was added. But there were arguments about how it should be mixed and which backing track should be used. I think it was more of an ego thing than anything else. We actually went head to head over which of two different drum tracks to use. If you put them both on a record today, I don't think anyone could tell the difference. But it seemed important at the time. So it ended up with us taking a drum fill out of the one version and putting it into the other version by editing a 16-track tape—splitting it down the middle so you have two strips of tape, one-inch wide." [*This is called a 'window edit'—Ed.*]

Tempers flared during the mixdown of "Comfortably Numb" in Los Angeles. A particularly heated confrontation between Gilmour and Waters took place over dinner one night at an Italian restaurant in North Hollywood. "There was no screaming, though," says Ezrin. "It was all very English, very direct: 'You're a fuck and you have no reason to live.' That sort of cold, head-on English confrontation. And I was right in the middle of it. I was fighting at that point for the introduction of the orchestra and



Setting up for a show at the Los Angeles Sports Arena, 1980

NEAL PRESTON/CORBIS

the expansion of the Pink Floyd sound into something that was more theatrical, more filmic. But Dave really saw 'Comfortably Numb' more as a bare-bones track with just bass, drums and guitar. Roger sided with me on that particular point. What we ended up with is the body of the song being more heavily orchestral, and then the end clears out somewhat and is more rock and roll. So 'Comfortably Numb' is a true collaboration because it's David's music, Roger's lyrics and my orchestral chart!"

Gilmour contributed an especially expressive guitar solo on "Comfortably Numb." Although it is beautifully structured, the guitarist says very little forethought, if any, went into it: "As far as I remember, I just went out into the studio at Superbear, bunged five or six solos down and then just picked the best bits from each one."

Other aspects of the project weren't so random. Given their financial predicament, Pink Floyd badly needed a hit single. The group had never really released singles or catered to that market and were reluctant to do so now. But Bob Ezrin heard considerable melodic potential in "Another Brick in the Wall," a Waters composition that is restated at three different points in the narrative, each time with a different musical arrangement and different lyrics. "Another Brick in the Wall (Part 2)" contained the memorable lines, "We don't need no education, we don't need no thought control," but didn't have enough verses to conform to the conventional pop single format. Ezrin had had great success using a children's chorus on Alice Cooper's "School's Out," a song similar in subject matter to "Another Brick in the Wall (Part 2)." So word was sent back to Pink Floyd's Britannia Row studios in England. Engineer Nick Griffiths arranged for some children from Islington Green School, just around the corner from Britannia Row, to come into the studio. Griffiths set up some mikes and the children, under the direction of their music teacher, sang the lyric to "Another Brick in the Wall (Part 2)," imparting particular gusto to the line, "Hey, teacher, leave us kids alone!"

"We were at Producers Workshop at the time," Waters recalls. "I remember sending the multi-track tape to Nick Griffiths in London and asking him to copy the backing track, record the kids, stick it all together and send it back to us. We just had one conversation. The tape came back in a Federal Express parcel, and I remember saying, 'Oh, let's have a listen.'

"I feel shivery now remembering the feeling of what it was like hearing those kids singing that song. I knew it was a hit record. There were a lot of great moments like that, when we were working at Producers Workshop."

On a less cheerful note, Rick Wright, who'd been with Pink Floyd since the beginning, was dismissed by Waters during the making of *The Wall*. Waters felt the keyboardist wasn't pulling his weight. Bad feelings first arose over Wright's wish to be a producer of the album, along with Waters, Gilmour and Ezrin.

"We agreed at the beginning that if Rick really did help with the production he could then call himself a producer and get credit for it," says Waters. "So Rick would sit in on the sessions from morning until night every day and never left the studio. At a certain point, I remember Ezrin getting irritated because Rick said he didn't like some idea. And I remember Ezrin saying about Rick, 'Why does he sit here all day?' I said, 'Don't you understand? He thinks he's producing the record.' Ezrin said, 'Don't be ridiculous.' To which I replied, 'I promise you. You ask Rick. But wait 'til I'm not here!' He asked him and came back and said, 'You're absolutely right. That's exactly what he thought.' So I said, 'Have you told him?' And he said, 'Yeah. I told him that's not what producing a record is.' So we never saw Rick again. That was it. He disappeared."

Waters also fell out with graphic designer

Storm Thorgerson, who'd been creating Pink Floyd album covers and other artwork for years. Satirical cartoonist Gerald Scarfe wound up collaborating with Waters on the sleeve design for *The Wall*. Scarfe's artwork would become an integral part of the live concert presentation of *The Wall* and the subsequent film as well.

Released on November 20, 1979, the *Wall* album was an instant commercial success. But Waters and the surviving members of Pink Floyd had scant leisure to savor their triumph. They plunged almost immediately into the next phase of the project.

IN THE FLESH

***THE WALL* HAD** initially been conceived as a live performance statement. Before he'd written a note of music or a single scrap of plot, Waters had become obsessed with the powerful visual image of a huge wall stretching across the proscenium of an arena stage. In transforming Pink Floyd's concept double album into a concert spectacle, Waters finally got to build his wall—or rather a full crew of stage hands did, brick by massive cardboard brick, on a nightly basis. The gigantic 130-feet-wide by 65-feet-high edifice was raised at the lip of the stage as Pink Floyd played the album's music. By the time the colossal edifice was completed, midway through the show, Pink Floyd were completely obscured from the audience's view, hidden behind the wall—an epic-scale enactment of Pink's, and by extension Waters', moment of greatest alienation.

During the second half of the show, the big cardboard wall became the single biggest prop in the entire history of rock and roll. Brick faces swung open to disclose sets and scenes: Pink (played by Waters) in his hotel room. Gerald Scarfe's nightmarish animations were projected onto the wall. David Gilmour stood on top of the wall, like the conquering hero in a Hercules movie, to play the "Comfortably Numb" solo. And in the end, of course, the wall came tumbling down, like its Biblical predecessor in Jericho.

Everything about the production was big. There was even a surrogate band: guitarist Snowy White, bassist Andy Bown, drummer Willie Wilson and keyboardist Peter Wood. Intended to represent Pink's band when the protagonist has entered his psychotic fascist alter ego, this quartet came onstage before the actual members of Pink Floyd to play the opening number "In the Flesh," wearing masks of the four Pink Floyd members' faces. White, Bown, Wilson and Wood then acted as auxiliary musicians throughout the rest of the show. Bown's presence freed Waters from the bass, so he could act out scenes in character, as Pink—albeit with a big pair of headphones on. (This was before the invention of in-ear monitors.) At the time, Waters also groused that Wilson and Wood were necessary because Nick Mason and Rick Wright couldn't play well enough. Although Wright was officially out of Pink Floyd at this point, and had been excluded from the band's business partnership, he did play the *Wall* tour on a salaried basis. Consequently he is the only one of the four who made any money off the tour. The other three sunk their own funds into the enormous production.

And truly enormous it was: 45 tons of equipment and a 45,000 watt P.A. It was quickly determined that many venues just couldn't accommodate so big a show. For a few mad, Spinal Tap moments, the band considered designing and building their own portable concert venue—a kind of high-tech circus tent shaped like a giant slug.

Ultimately, however, the "slug" idea was abandoned. Realizing that the show was too big to be a conventional rock tour, Pink Floyd decided to do extended runs at venues in four major cities: the Los Angeles Sports Arena, Nassau Coliseum just outside New York, Earl's Court in London and Westfallenhalle in Dortmund, West Germany. While all these venues are large arenas, none are the huge sports stadiums that Waters so hated playing, a hatred that moved him to write the wall in the first place.

> *"Lumps of burning drape the size of tennis balls started hitting the stage all around us. And the auditorium was beginning to fill up with smoke."*—Waters

The scope of the show enabled Waters to include a number of songs he had written for *The Wall* but which didn't make it onto the album. The job of coordinating the live music with all the elaborate staging elements fell to David Gilmour, who was appointed musical director for the show.

"For me the *Wall* show was terrific fun," says the guitarist. "Really an achievement for everyone involved, particularly Roger. But I had to take on the role of music director and deal with a lot of musical details onstage so that Roger didn't have to think about that. It was really tough at first. Later on it got a little easier, once we all got into it. But I had a huge cue sheet up on my amps, because we had all these cues coming up on monitors or on screen, and there were different DDL [*digital delay*]settings which I had to transmit with very primitive equipment to all the delay lines onstage. Very tricky. Except for the 'Comfortably Numb' solo, there were virtually no moments where I could say, 'Forget everything. Just play.' You know?

"It was very rigid. On all the previous tours—*Wish You Were Here, Dark Side of the Moon*—there were moments that could be extended longer or made shorter if you liked. *The Wall*, quite reasonably, because it was a different kind of project, didn't have that."

After a rehearsal in nearby Culver City, the show opened in Los Angeles on February 7, 1980. As if the spectacular effects planned by the show's organizers weren't enough, the opening night audience got a little bonus excitement—a fire onstage early in the performance.

"Andy Bown and Snowy and those guys did their thing," Waters recalls, "And then this drape went up to reveal us. Fireworks had gone off beforehand and one of the Roman candles had gotten into this drape and set light to it. I was singing away and I kept hearing this noise and I thought, God, the P.A.'s going off. 'Cause I could hear this strange noise. Eventually I looked up and saw one of the riggers, a guy called Rocky, leap about six feet through the air, with no safety harness or anything on him, from one drape to another. He had a fire extinguisher in one hand and he was trying to put the thing out. And then lumps of burning drape the size of tennis balls started hitting the stage all around us. And the auditorium was beginning to fill up with smoke. I made a decision that this was not cool. So I stopped singing and just shouted 'stop!' through the P.A. Throughout rehearsals, the guys out at the mixing console were so used to me constantly yelling 'stop'—if something wasn't right, you know. So when I did it during the actual show they must have all thought they were hallucinating. 'Cause they just carried on. So I shouted 'stop!' again. This time, they said, 'Okay, he really does seem to be saying stop. I guess we have to.' And I said, 'Look, we're going to have to lower this drape, because we've got a fire. Everything's cool. We'll put it out, go back five minutes and pick up from there.' Which we did. But it was quite a hair-raising beginning to the first show."

DON'T LEAVE ME NOW

ROGER WATERS' working relationship with David Gilmour and Nick Mason lasted through one more album after *The Wall*: 1983's *The Final Cut*. Not long after the making of that record—a difficult process by most accounts—Waters parted company with his two former colleagues on somewhat less than friendly terms. Waters later lost a legal battle in which he sought to prevent Gilmour, Mason and Wright from recording or performing under the name Pink Floyd. Though the four of them reunited in 2005 for the Live 8 concert in London, there were no plans for a followup album or tour, and any hope of a future reunion was mooted by Rick Wright's death in September 2008.

Unlike Pink Floyd, *The Wall* has continued to live on, inspiring even its creator to look deeper into the meaning of life and identity. "What happens when you tear down the wall? And what's out there? I had no fucking idea back then," Waters says. "Maybe what I've discovered is that the answer to the question 'Is there anybody out there?' is ultimately no. That's not what's important. What's important is what's inside you. Of course, contact with other people is important. But fundamentally, it's what's going on inside that's most important." *GL*

The '80s

*From **METALLICA** to **MÖTLEY CRÜE** and **VAN HALEN** to **IRON MAIDEN**, the Eighties was the golden age of virtuoso guitar playing, thrash metal, long hair and groupies.*

GUITAR LEGENDS #109

THE STATE OF HARD ROCK WAS particularly precarious as the Seventies turned into the Eighties. Led Zeppelin had crashed in the wake of John Bonham's death, and the Who, still on the rebound from the passing of Keith Moon, were anything but all right after the deaths of 11 fans at a December 1979 show in Cincinnati. Ozzy Osbourne had been expelled from Black Sabbath, Deep Purple were in the deep freeze, Aerosmith were in the ruts, and AC/DC frontman Bon Scott was a couple of months from making his big bon voyage.

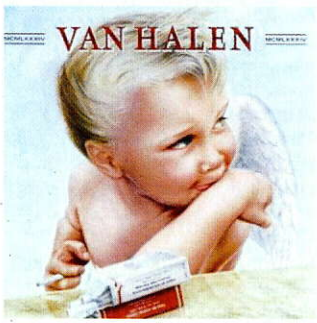
WHO COULD HAVE GUESSED that out of such seeming despair and decay would rise hard rock's most ambitious, prodigious and popular era. In hindsight, it was probably inevitable. The Eighties brought forth a new rock and roll generation, the offspring of those who went gaga for Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, the Beatles, the Stones and Jimi Hendrix. Rock was no longer a gap at home; it was the music kids grew up listening to, indoctrinating them, establishing their tastes and sending them in search of music to call their own.

That phenomenon helped vault hard rock into previously unimagined territories, including Top 40 radio and multi-Platinum sales. In the process, it made superstars out of the likes of Def Leppard, Mötley Crüe, Poison, Scorpions, Metallica, Bon Jovi and Guns N' Roses, while it provided new avenues for Seventies veterans like Aerosmith, Alice Cooper and Kiss.

The advent of music videos only bolstered the size of that audience. MTV opened a portal for musicians to make a greater impact with their fans, and the hard rockers responded in kind. Many of them—Mötley Crüe, Poison, Twisted Sister—shoveled on the mascara and the mousse in an effort to glam themselves up for mass consumption, even at the risk of being tagged girly men from the heavier quarters of their genre.

But the Eighties were not all about style; there was plenty of innovation as well. Guitarists like the late Randy Rhoads, Steve Vai and Joe Satriani followed Edward Van Halen's virtuoso lead and stretched the instrument into the sonic netherworld. Bands like Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer and Danzig brought their fury into thrash, speed and death metal, while groups like the Crüe and Guns N' Roses knitted together the realms of glam and punk with

Van Halen in March 1984



more classic conventions for their own instantly copied sounds.

Some were riding the lightning, others were rocking like a hurricane and still others wanted nothing but a good time. But when it came to giving hard rock a firm foothold in the commercial marketplace, Poison had the ultimate word when it posited that "It don't get better than this."

1984 (1984)

VAN HALEN

OVER THE COURSE OF FIVE previous albums, Van Halen had established themselves as hard rock's new heroes, due in part to David Lee Roth's vaudevillian theatrics. But it happened mostly because Edward Van Halen had stepped forward as a guitarist for a new age, with fleet-fingered techniques, a fresh arsenal of sounds and an inventive sensibility that was redefining the way people were approaching the instrument. He was already riding high from his cameo guitar solo on Michael Jackson's "Beat It." And when a million people showed up to see the Southern California quartet headline hard rock day at the 1983 US Festival, it was clear VH were ready to explode even bigger.

Imagine, then, the surprise when the first thing we heard from *1984* was not some trend-setting guitar riff but rather the sustained synthesizer hook of "Jump." "It's a pretty well-known fact that certain people didn't want me playing keyboards because they thought I should only be a 'guitar hero,' " Van Halen said of the song. Even so, "Jump" vaulted to No. 1 and gave *1984* an instant multi-Platinum launch when it was released on New Year's Eve.

"Jump" wasn't entirely a departure for Van Halen. The group's catalog was already brimming with melodic, hooky radio hits, including "Jamie's Cryin'," "Dance the Night Away" and "Little Guitars." And Eddie, who learned piano before guitar, had employed keyboards on previous albums. "I saw no harm in my playing keyboards, as long as I do it well," says Van Halen, who recorded "Jump" on an OBX-A synthesizer while 5150 was being constructed. "I just knew which sound I wanted to noodle with; not necessarily for 'Jump,' but just to noodle with."

"I'll Wait," *1984*'s second hit, was another keyboard-led song—one Van Halen says his bandmates fought hard against in the studio. But there were still plenty of guitars on *1984*: Flying Vs on "Hot for Teacher" and "Drop Dead Legs," and Stratocasters on "Panama" and "Girl Gone Bad." "Top Jimmy," meanwhile, marked the album debut of the Ripley stereo guitar, which allowed the player to pan each of the guitar's strings to its own place in the stereo spectrum.

One year after *1984*'s release, Roth left to launch a solo career. He was replaced by Sammy Hagar soon afterward. Van Halen became the rare band to change lead singers and not only maintain its popularity but better it. But that would not have happened without *1984*, the album that pushed Van Halen from rock and roll fame to the rarefied world of pop superstardom.

SHOUT AT THE DEVIL (1983)

MÖTLEY CRÜE

MÖTLEY CRÜE WERE NOT the first rock band to wear makeup, to sing leeringly about women or to invoke satanic imagery. But the quartet's second album, a Top 20 smash

that sold more than three million copies, announced the arrival of the new wave of Southern California hard rock, opening commercial doors for the likes of Poison, Ratt, scores of wannabes and, later, Guns N' Roses.

Mötley Crüe in 1983

Shout at the Devil also established the Crüe as rock's leading purveyors of bad-boydom (or bad-boy dumb—take your pick). Any satanic reference was likely to get the attention of right-wing and parents groups, and the Crüe's pentagon-shaped logo certainly didn't comfort those who feared the band was in consort with Beelzebub. To top it off, the band indulged in a heavy ration of rock's traditional vices: sex and drugs.

That lifestyle is reflected throughout *Shout at the Devil*, a roiling celebration of life in the ultra-fast lane from guys who were maybe a bit too green to keep control of the car. Bassist Nikki Sixx, in fact, crashed his into a telephone pole during the recording of the album, dislocating his shoulder and forcing him to record his parts for "Red Hot" while wearing a massive cast and popping 10 Percodans a day.

But the outer chaos only fueled the Crüe's creativity. *Shout at the Devil* was the battle cry straight from the L.A. streets: part metal, part punk and part hook-filled pop, supercharged by Mick Mars' searing guitar licks, the driving thunder-bottom of Sixx and drummer Tommy Lee and frontman Vince Neil's howl-at-the-moon vocals. The decadence-championing anthems "Looks That Kill" and "Too Young to Fall in Love" got the band on the radio; Ozzy Osbourne put them in front of thousands every night as the support act on his 1984 tour.

And thanks to *Shout at the Devil*'s success, the Crüe's self-released debut, *Too Fast for Love* (reissued by Elektra), belatedly hit the charts and earned its own Platinum album. The parents may have been scared to death, but the little girls—and even the boys—understood.

Metallica circa 1984

RIDE THE LIGHTNING (1984)

METALLICA

REFLECTING ON METALLICA'S sophomore album, drummer Lars Ulrich once observed, "This was a turning point for the band. This album

ANDY FREEBERG / RETNA LTD. (VAN HALEN); PATRICIA STEUR / SUNSHINE / RETNA UK (MÖTLEY CRÜE); ROSS HALFIN (METALLICA)

focused a lot on melodies and not just guitars crashing. It was a really cool album."

For the loquacious Ulrich, that was a rare moment of understatement. *Ride the Lightning* is more than cool; it's a masterwork that not only demonstrated marked

growth over 1983's attention-grabbing debut *Kill 'Em All* but also alerted the world to the true creative possibilities of the thrash metal subgenre. Before *Ride the Lightning* came out, thrash was regarded in some quarters as rock and roll's latest batch of noise played with impressive speed and intense energy that acknowledged its sources in the New Wave of British Heavy Metal. Metallica changed all that with its greater sense of dynamics, employing whiplash timing, crisp on-a-dime changes and precise arpeggiated riffing by Kirk Hammett and James Hetfield.

Lightning was recorded at Sweet Silence Studios in Copenhagen, Denmark (Ulrich's homeland), at a time when the band was experiencing tumult in its business operations. Those problems helped to create a dark mood, from which Hetfield—newly invested in his role as Metallica's frontman—mined the album's songs. The themes included the tenth plague of Egypt (death of the first-born) for the anthemic "Creeping Death," drowning for "Trapped Under Ice," nuclear holocaust on "Fight Fire with Fire" and death by electrocution in the ferocious title track. "Call of Ktulu" is filled with mythic grandeur, but the track that really raised eyebrows was "Fade to Black," a rumination on suicide that dared to be a ballad-tempo dirge in a field that eschewed such songs as wimpy.

Metallica's creative ascent only continued after *Ride the Lightning*, growing more sophisticated and ferocious on subsequent releases such as *Master of Puppets* and ... *And Justice for All* before hitting mainstream pay dirt with the multi-million selling triumph of 1991's *Metallica* (a.k.a. "The Black Album"). *Lightning* was the beginning of the ride, however, the album that gave thrash its first strike above the heavy metal underground.

Iron Maiden in 1982

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST (1982)

IRON MAIDEN

"YOU KNOW WHEN astrologers talk about a planetary lineup?" Iron Maiden's foghorn-in-chief Bruce Dickinson once mused. "Like, 'this conjunction only happens once in a blue moon' sort of thing? What you have with *Number of the Beast* is the musical equivalent." The metaphor, while extravagant, was and is absolutely right. Released in 1982, Maiden's third album marked the moment when all the pieces fell into place for the British band.

Prior to its recording, Iron Maiden were a band in transition. Paul Di'Anno, the group's volatile frontman, walked out after the world tour for Maiden's second album, *Killers*. Dickinson, then the singer in Samson, had been watching Maiden from the pit on their tours—and thinking that he could do a rather better job of fronting them. Word of his talent and aspirations reached Maiden's manager, who tracked him down at the Reading Festival and subsequently signed him to the band's lead singer slot.

With Dickinson in place, Maiden began recording what many consider the most important metal album of the decade. *The Number of the Beast* combined aggression with imagination and an awareness of culture. The title track, for instance, was based on *Tam O' Shanter*, a Robert Burns poem that Harris had read at school. "The Prisoner" was inspired by the cult Sixties TV program of the same name, and the reflective "Children of the Damned" combined lyrics inspired by the classic horror film with Harris' love of prog-rock time signatures.

Even with no airplay and little marketing, *The Number of the Beast* reached 33 on the *Billboard* Pop charts, earning a Gold disc the following year and going Platinum a few years later, setting up the band for the hallowed position they occupy to this day.

BRITISH STEEL (1980)

JUDAS PRIEST

JUDAS PRIEST'S 1980 masterpiece wasn't just the archetypal metal album; it was also a powerful social critique. Written as the nation's steelworkers began a general strike, *British Steel* was a reflection of the growing discontent at the dawn of the Thatcher years. From the mission statement of "Breaking the Law" to the confrontational rabble-rousing of "United," the album's track listing reads like a call to arms. The songs are laced with empathy and aggression, bound together by the theme of defiance in the face of misfortune. "It was definitely a statement," says guitarist Glenn Tipton.

Priest were already respected, but they needed a truly classic album to match their visual flair and live prowess. They finally got one in early 1980, as the band and producer Tom Allom headed into the Startling Studios at Tittenhurst Park. Located within the former Berkshire estate of John Lennon, the studio was rented out as recording space by Lennon's former bandmate Ringo Starr, who'd purchased the estate in 1973.

As it turned out, Tittenhurst itself would play a major role in the recording of *British Steel*. Having decided that the studio wasn't working, the band took over the house itself, recording the drums in the marble entrance hall and the Tipton and K.K. Downing's dueling guitar parts in a huge room that created an arena-like reverb. Soon enough, the group's imagination was running riot: "Metal Gods" featuring the sound of doors being slammed and trays of cutlery being dropped, and "Breaking the Law" including the sound of smashed milk bottles and a police siren emulated on a guitar. "In those days, we used to invent everything we could," says Tipton. "It was a fun album to do."

British Steel was the turning point. It marked the moment when Judas Priest broke America (thanks largely to the airplay of "Living After Midnight") while staying true to their parochial Midlands roots. "After *British Steel*," notes Halford, "things just notched into another gear. It just exploded." *GL*

Judas Priest in Holland, 1980

MICHAEL PUTLAND / RETNA LTD. (IRON MAIDEN); PETER MAZEL / SUNSHINE / RETNA LTD. (JUDAS PRIEST)

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For Whom the Bells Toll

Guitar Legends celebrates the enduring appeal of AC/DC's **BACK IN BLACK,** *an all-time classic album that nearly wasn't made.*

by Geoff Barton & Jens Jam Rasmussen

GUITAR LEGENDS #109

IN EARLY 1980, AC/DC WERE IN BRITAIN and on top of the world. The Australian hard rockers were taking it easy in London, basking in the hard-earned success of their first U.S. million-selling album, Highway to Hell. Singer Bon Scott was getting drunk and getting laid, guitarist Angus Young was getting married, and the group was in the early stages of writing its next album. All was right with the world.

THEN THE PHONE CALL CAME from AC/DC's manager. He was at King's College Hospital, London, identifying the body of a 33-year-old man who'd been found in a puddle of vomit in a car. It was Bon, he confirmed. He'd drunk himself to death.

As the news sunk in, AC/DC went from stunned disbelief to emotional devastation. Three months earlier, they had been opening for—and upstaging—Cheap Trick and Ted Nugent in the United States. Now, in a cold and grim South London winter, they were just a shadow of the band they'd been. "We were so depressed," said Malcolm Young, Angus' brother and coguitarist. "We were just walking around in silence. Because there was nothing."

JUST ONE YEAR BEFORE there seemed to be everything. Rewind to 1979—a remarkable year in AC/DC's history. As it began, AC/DC announced a plan to make their first album without their longtime producers Harry Vanda and George Young, the elder brother of Angus and Malcolm. Almost simultaneously, they acquired a powerful new manager, Peter Mensch, an aggressive, no-nonsense American who had helped develop the careers of Aerosmith and Ted Nugent and would go on to create the mighty Q-Prime, whose biggest client is Metallica.

As spring arrived, AC/DC flew to Miami to begin recording *Highway to Hell* with producer Eddie Kramer, who had worked with Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin and Kiss, among others. Unfortunately, it was a rather unproductive three weeks. "Kramer was a bit of a prat," Malcolm recalls. "He looked at Bon and said to us: 'Can your guy sing?' He might've sat behind the knobs for Hendrix, but he's certainly not Hendrix, I can tell you that much."

Frustrated by the lack of progress AC/DC left Florida and returned to the U.K. There, they decided to try their luck with an up-and-coming producer. Robert John "Mutt" Lange had a few studio credits under his belt—including the Boomtown Rats, City Boy, the Motors and Graham Parker—but his work with AC/DC would prove to be the turning point in his career. Afterward, he would go on to create hit

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On the *Back in Black* tour, Belgium, July 1980

Rehearsing for the tour at the New Victoria Theatre, London, June 1980

records with Def Leppard, Foreigner, the Cars, Bryan Adams, Heart and many others, including his wife Shania Twain.

Soon after AC/DC and Lange began recording tracks at the Roundhouse Studios in North London, it became clear that he wanted to refine the group's dynamics. The result was that AC/DC still sounded in your face but their choruses were more melodic and structured. Lange did an admirable job of distilling and sharpening the band's songs without losing the raw edge that was the source of their appeal.

If there was any price to Lange's method, it was paid in studio time. AC/DC were accustomed to polishing off an album in three weeks; under Lange's tutelage it took three months. "He's very much the sound guy," Angus noted. "With AC/DC that was his big thing. He was always trying to get tuned in on the sound quality. We were always ones for the groove quality and the song quality."

Highway to Hell was released in the summer. The group toured behind it in the U.K. and Europe with up-and-coming New Wave of British Heavy Metal bands such as Def Leppard and Diamond Head, as well as the more established Judas Priest. From there, they went to the U.S., where they were the tough act Cheap Trick and Ted Nugent had to follow. Returning to Britain, AC/DC were special guests to their own favorite band, the Who, at a one-off show at Wembley Stadium on August 18.

AC/DC ended their *Highway to Hell* tour with six shows at London's old Hammersmith Odeon (now the Apollo) during Christmas '79 and a couple of rescheduled gigs in Newcastle and Southampton the following January. But well before then, *Highway to Hell* was an unqualified artistic and commercial success. It had hit Number Eight in the U.K. and become their first chart album in the U.S., where it peaked at Number 17. The title track was also a Top 50 single in the States. The successes seemed just rewards for AC/DC's hard work and well-crafted career moves, and 1979 was destined to be remembered as a pivotal year in the group's future.

IN FEBRUARY 1980, Angus and Malcolm, the group's core songwriters, checked into London rehearsal studio E-Zee Hire to begin composing material for the group's next album. They had plenty of ideas already: the songwriting process for their new record had begun the previous year in hotel rooms and during snatched moments backstage and on the tour bus.

Angus and Malcolm were strumming away energetically when Bon walked into the studio. "Need a drummer, fellas?" he asked. In the years prior to joining AC/DC, Bon had often been both drummer and vocalist for various small-time Australian bands. "I like to keep my hand in, y'know."

The Youngs were glad for the assistance, and Bon joined in on a nearby drum kit. A loose, light-hearted session commenced, but soon Angus and Malcolm began to pummel out a mighty, distinctive riff. Bon allied himself to the beat, and swiftly and surely, a song that would eventually be titled "Have a Drink on Me" took shape. Later, Bon helped formulate the drum intro to a second song, one of Malcolm's that would gain the moniker "Let Me Put My Love Into You."

At the end of the rehearsal, Bon suggested meeting again the following week. "That'll give me time to write some lyrics. Then we can have another go at the songs." Then he said his goodbyes and left the studio.

A few days later, on Wednesday, February 20, the terrible news reached Angus, Malcolm and the rest of the AC/DC camp: their frontman was dead. The band members were stunned, but their mourning was not only for Bon; it was also for AC/DC. Surely, people speculated, they could never recover from the blow of losing such a key member, a man whose roughhouse image, raucous vocals and lewd lyricism were such key elements of their success.

IN THE DAYS and weeks after February 20, while the British rock press published tributes and obituaries about AC/DC's front man, the remaining band members prepared themselves disconsolately for Bon's funeral service. It was to be held on March 1 in Fremantle, the harbor town where he'd grown up, just south of the West Australian city of Perth.

Speaking to *Guitar World*, 25 years after the funeral, Angus Young clearly recalls meeting up with Bon's parents in Freemantle and what that fateful encounter meant to the future of the band.

"We flew back to Australia and spent some time with Bon's mum [*Isa*] and dad [*Charles, also known as Chick*]. I remember Bon's dad saying to Malcolm and me: 'You must continue with AC/DC. You're young guys, you're on the brink of major success and you can't afford to give up now.' But we weren't really listening; we were so wrapped up in our grief. Bon's dad kept repeating his assurances. He told us time and again: 'You should keep going, you've still got a lot to give.' "

Despite the encouragement, Angus and Malcolm weren't in the mood to think about continuing. "We were heartbroken," says Angus

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bluntly. "Okay, we knew the world had lost a big talent and, of course, our fans were devastated. But we had lost much more. We had lost a friend—a very close friend. Honestly, we didn't know what to do with ourselves at the time."

Contrary to some claims, AC/DC didn't immediately begin auditioning singers in the days after Bon's demise. Notes Malcolm, "Peter Mensch approached us on the plane on the flight back to the U.K. [*after Bon Scott's funeral*] saying he had a list of singers' names for us to look at. I just couldn't be bothered. I remember waving them away and just thinking it's not fucking right, you know?"

But as March slowly passed, Angus and Malcolm pulled themselves together for another effort at what was still an uncertain album project. Recalls Angus, "When we got back to London after the funeral, we didn't really get together too much. But after a couple of weeks or so, Malcolm called me up and said, 'Instead of the two of us just sitting around and moping, doing nothing, why don't we do some work? At least that'll keep us together.' "

The brothers closeted themselves away in their rehearsal studio and adopted a siege mentality. Says Angus, "We just hid ourselves away and worked on our songs." A veil of secrecy quickly descended. "There were a lot of rumors going around at the time. People wanted to know what we were up to and what our plans were. A lot of journalists were calling up our record company and asking for interviews. But it was much too early. At the time we weren't really capable of dealing with very much. We'd lost someone very close to us and we weren't thinking very clearly. But we decided working was better than sitting there, still in shock about Bon."

In this way, *Back in Black* began to come together. In addition to the songs the Youngs had written with Bon at E-Zee Hire, Malcolm had completed what would become the new album's title track. But the future of AC/DC was still very much up in the air. Says Angus, "We didn't really know if the material we had was decent enough. We didn't have much of a perspective on things. So what kept us going? Well, Malcolm and me had started the band together and, subconsciously I suppose, we didn't want it to end. We didn't want to leave things unfinished. We'd worked on a few songs with Bon just before his death, after all. And his dad wanted us to carry on. Somehow we couldn't bear to turn around and say: 'That's it, we're not doing do it anymore.' "

As it became evident that AC/DC would attempt to carry on, the question of who would front the group arose. "When we felt we were close to having all the songs together, we knew we had to confront the question of a new singer," says Angus. "But it wasn't like we put an advertisement in a music paper that said, 'AC/DC want a new frontman.' That would have been too over the top. It was subtler than that. People like Bon are unique, they're special, and we didn't want someone to come in and copy him. If anything, we wanted someone who was their own character."

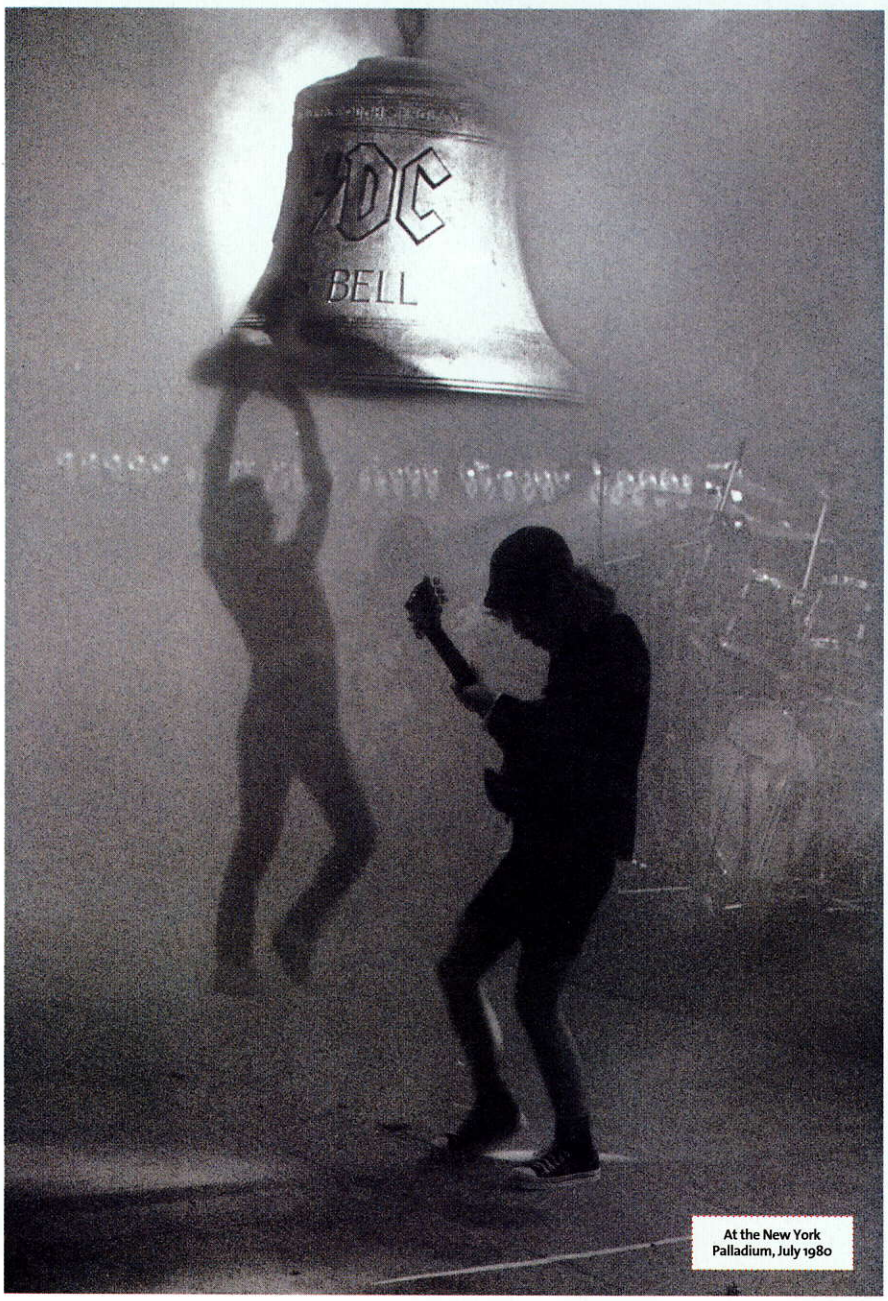
Numerous and varied frontmen were rumored to be lining up to stake their claim as Bon Scott's replacement. Among them were Stevie Wright from the Easybeats, the Australian rock group from the Sixties founded by AC/DC's now-former producers Harry Vanda and George Young; Englishman Steve Burton, the gravel-voiced singer who fronted the Starfighters, an act featuring Angus and Malcolm's cousin Stevie Young; and Terry Wilson-Slesser who had found fame in Back Street Crawler, the band formed by ex-Free guitarist Paul Kossoff. Marc Storace of Swiss band Krokus claims he was offered the AC/DC position: "I wasn't even tempted," he says, "because I believed Krokus were going to continue to get bigger. But back then I was cocky and naïve."

Speaking today, Angus Young is still cagey about the audition process. "All I can say is that lot of people were being suggested. Old friends were calling us up and saying: 'Hey, I know someone who could do the job.' And people who you're familiar with, who you know quite well...you do invite them along and give them a listen, don't you?"

One of those invited along was a stocky fellow in a cloth cap: Brian Johnson. Hailing from County Durham in the northeast of England, Johnson was then in the process of trying to relaunch his Seventies band Geordie, one-hit wonders in the U.K. whose single "All Because of You" reached Number Six in the chart in early '73.

Twenty-five years down the line, it's now clear that Bon Scott had a posthumous effect in picking his successor. "We certainly knew Bon was a fan of Brian Johnson's," says Angus. "Bon had seen Brian in England [*in 1973*] and been very impressed by him. Bon was touring with a band he was in before AC/DC called Fraternity, and they opened up for Geordie.

"Bon was a big Little Richard fan—he believed that anyone singing rock and roll would have to match Little Richard. I remember Bon saying that Brian was a great rock and roll singer in the Little Richard mold."



At the New York Palladium, July 1980

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Recalling those fond memories, Angus and the boys agreed to try out Johnson as AC/DC's new singer. "Jonno," as he would become known, got the call to come down to London and rehearse with the band on March 29, 1980. Long after his appointed hour, Johnson was nowhere to be found. AC/DC eventually located him: he was downstairs playing pool with their roadies. They couldn't help but laugh; Brian sounded just like the kind of down-to-earth guy they needed.

Johnson sang "Whole Lotta Rosie" at his audition. It was a brave move to tackle a track so intimately associated with Bon Scott. Recalls Angus, "I think Malcolm asked him, 'Tell us which songs you feel comfortable with.' And Brian said he knew 'Whole Lotta Rosie,' so we played that. Brian also wanted to try 'Highway to Hell.' Malcolm said, 'What else do you want to try?' And I think we played a rock and roll song, maybe a Little Richard one or something."

How much time elapsed from the audition until Brian Johnson joined AC/DC officially? "Well, there were some other people we had to see, so I suppose it was a few weeks," says Angus. But Malcolm apparently made up his mind on the spot: "Brian sang great. It [*Johnson's audition*] put a little smile on our face—for the first time since Bon."

Johnson recalls his reaction upon being offered the job: "I remember thinking to myself, Oh, Brian, what have you got yourself into? I wasn't scared, though—I was excited. I looked at it like, Well, if I do get fired, I can tell me mates I was in AC/DC for a couple of weeks and I'd had a nice holiday in London."

Johnson's "holiday"—now 25 years long—commenced at the end of April at Compass Point Studios in the exotic city of Nassau, the Bahamas. The recording of *Back in Black* would continue through May, with Robert John "Mutt" Lange once again at the production helm.

DESPITE THEIR NEWFOUND forward momentum, AC/DC still had the option to abort the recording process if they felt the album wasn't working out as intended. "There was a little bit of pressure to it," says Angus, "a commitment that we had to complete the record by a certain target date. But equally, we could've gone in and recorded some tracks and said, 'No, we don't like them, it doesn't feel right.' "

After a couple of weeks rehearsing their new songs with Johnson in London, AC/DC flew to the Bahamas. They arrived during a lull in a storm that raged across the island for the next three days. As Johnson recalled: "It wasn't a tropical paradise; it wasn't all white beaches. It was pissing it down. There was flooding and all the electricity went out. No television."

It was not the most auspicious start, but the inclement weather had one benefit: it provided the inspiration for the opening lines to *Back in Black*'s first track, "Hells Bells": "I'm the rolling thunder, the pouring rain/I'm comin' on like a hurricane."

Says Angus, "We pretty much had all the tracks together. The last track we completed was 'Rock and Roll Ain't Noise Pollution,' which Malcolm and me actually wrote there [*in the Bahamas*]. We felt that we were a track short and we spent a few days writing it in between guitar overdubs and the other things we were doing on the record."

The song's title was rumored to be a line Bon Scott had originally used in an argument with his landlord, but Malcolm set the record straight: "The song was about London's old Marquee Club when it was in Wardour Street. It was in a built-up area and there was this whole thing about noise pollution in the news, the whole environmental health thing. That's where it came from."

What about the remainder of *Back in Black*'s lyrics? Angus admits: "A lot of ideas, choruses, song titles and lyrical snippets were already in place before Brian arrived." Rumors persist that AC/DC took the majority of *Back in Black*'s lyrics from a notebook Bon Scott had left behind after his death, but Angus denies it vehemently. "No, there was nothing from Bon's notebook. [*After his death*] all his stuff went direct to his mother and his family. It was personal material—letters and things. It wouldn't have been right to hang on to it. It wasn't ours to keep."

The recording of *Back in Black* continued apace, but the studio in Nassau wasn't all it was cracked up to be. Johnson recalls, "This big old black lady ruled that place with a rod of iron. We had to lock the doors at night because she'd warned us about these Haitians who'd come down at night and rob the place. So she bought us all these six-foot fishing spears to keep at the fucking door! It was a bit of a stretch from Newcastle, I can tell you."

Reports of a machete-wielding tourist killer prowling the beach nearby added to the tension, but as Malcolm points out, it wasn't all stress. "It was the best place to do that album because

With Brian Johnson (left), shortly after he joined, at E.Zee Hire Rehearsal Studio, London, April 1980

ROBERT ELLIS/REPFOTO

there was nothing going on. We'd sit through the night with a couple of bottles of rum with coconut milk and work. That's where a lot of the lyric ideas came from."

The band polished off *Black in Black* in about six weeks, a lightning-fast turnaround by "Mutt" Lange standards. The experience was, says Angus, "very good—for both us and him, I think. After he made *Highway to Hell* he was in big demand, but I thought it was good for him [*to record with AC/DC again*], especially after what had happened to us. It's to Mutt's credit that he still wanted to be involved with us after Bon's death."

At the end of the recording session, Johnson was mightily relieved. "It was about three in the afternoon," the singer recalls. "It was a beautiful sunny day and I went outside down to where the huts were. I sat on this wall and I got a ciggie out and sat among the trees. I was so happy that I'd done it." Still, he says, even at that point in the recording, he hadn't yet heard one song all the way through. "I'd go in and do a couple of verses, pop back and do a chorus. That's the way Mutt keeps you interested, you know." Ultimately, Johnson's only complaint concerned the high notes on "Shake a Leg." "Oh, that was fucking way up. Some of those notes will never be heard by man again."

RELEASED IN AMERICA on July 21, 1980, and in Britain and Europe 10 days later, *Back in Black* stormed to the Number One position in the U.K. album chart. It reached Number Four in the U.S. where it stayed in the chart for 131 weeks.

Back in Black has since passed the Double Diamond—20 million—mark for sales in the States alone, a record beaten by only five other records: the Eagles' *Greatest Hits* (28 million), Michael Jackson's *Thriller* (26 million), Pink Floyd's *The Wall* (23 million), *Led Zeppelin IV* (22 million) and Billy Joel's *Greatest Hits* (21 million). On a worldwide basis the album has passed 42 million sales. "Those are incredible figures," says Angus. "Mind boggling. All we've ever done throughout our career is record stuff we hope our fans will like. Nothing has been premeditated. That's how we've always approached it. We've been that way since the beginning. When we first started playing live, it was always a case of: what do the people who're paying money to see us want to hear?"

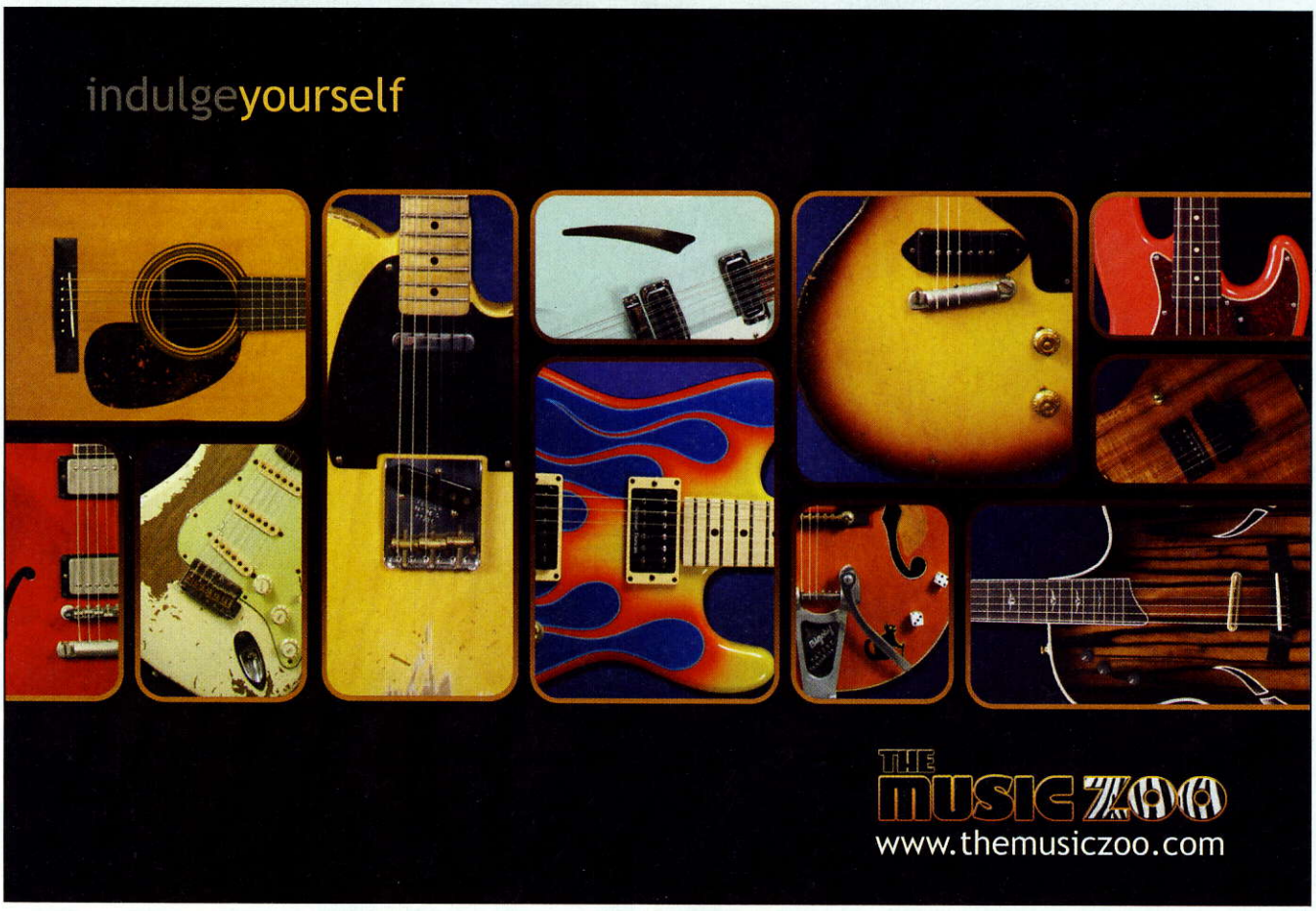
Back in Black also pays tribute to Bon Scott. "Well, that was the whole idea," says Angus. "The cover was black and the album began with the sound of a tolling bell." But it ain't all doom and gloom. The album is full of seductive party tunes like "Shoot to Thrill" and "You Shook Me All Night Long." "Yes," says Angus, "because you have to remember that Bon enjoyed a good party. When someone dies people often hold a wake, something that's more of a celebration of a person's life. Bon didn't dwell on the meaning of life too much. He lived for the moment."

> ***"The world had lost a big talent, but we had lost a friend. We didn't know what to do with ourselves at the time."*** **—Angus Young**

Twenty-five years after its release, *Back in Black* still stands the test of time remarkably well. Moreover, it continues to work on two levels: To the occasional rock-record buyer unconcerned about the finite details of AC/DC history, the album retains a commanding power and presence. To dyed-in-the-wool AC/DC fans *Back in Black* is a vital link between the Bon Scott era and the band's rebirth. The album is a turbulent mix of anger over Bon's untimely death and determination to carry on.

When asked what makes him most proud of *Back in Black* today, Angus replies somberly: "It's the fact that we were strong enough at the time to keep ourselves together and see our way through a major tragedy." ***GL***

Thanks to Philip Wilding and Laura Canyon for their help with this story.



Appetite-era GN'R: (from left) Izzy Stradlin, Steven Adler, Axl Rose, Duff McKagan and Slash

Rock of Ages

SLASH *recalls the making of* Appetite for Destruction, Guns N' Roses' *landmark album.*

by Robert Cherry

GUITAR LEGENDS #109

THE GUNS N' ROSES LEGEND IS FILLED WITH as many cautionary tales as rock and roll victories. There's the time Duff McKagan's pancreas burst from alcohol-induced pancreatitis. There's the time Izzy Stradlin was arrested for relieving himself in an airplane galley, and the time Axl Rose incited a stadium riot because someone in the audience took his photo.

BUT FOR A GUITARIST, there's perhaps no story more gruesome and edifying than the one told by the band's longstanding producer, Mike Clink.

"When I first met the band, Slash was playing a Jackson guitar. It was December, and it was cold in the rehearsal room at Hollywood's S.I.R. Studios. And Slash hadn't changed his strings in I don't know how long. So I said, 'You know, your strings are dead,' and he said, 'Okay, I'll change them.' So he goes off into a corner, and he cuts off all the strings at once. And the neck just tweaked. And from that moment on, that guitar never went into tune ever again. It was pretty horrendous."

Apparently, this is how legends are created, for this event transpired at the sessions for *Appetite for Destruction*, the album that would become Guns N' Roses' debut and one of rock's milestones. More than 20 years later, Slash's youthful insouciance comes through loud and clear. *Appetite for Destruction* is not the sound of a guitarist that would patiently replace one string at a time—it's the sound of a guitarist (two of them, actually) that will do whatever it takes to get back to playing his instrument sooner than later.

Coincidentally, Slash and Stradlin, the band's underrated and unfortunately press-shy rhythm guitarist, were jamming together for the first time in years when we contacted Slash to reminisce about the making of *Appetite*. Though Slash isn't one for dwelling on past successes, his reunion with Izzy had rekindled an appreciation for—and analysis of—the rare and exquisite chemistry that they captured on the album. In this exclusive interview, Slash jogs his memory about recording the first and best Guns album, revealing where it all went right—and very wrong.

GUITAR LEGENDS Is it safe to say that *Appetite* is your favorite Guns N' Roses album?

SLASH I love playing, recording and touring so much that, for me, each record has its own "whatever" about it. I had a blast making that record, but I just didn't realize how cool it was until way after the fact. When you make a record, it's really of-the-moment. After it's done, I never even listen to it again. I just enjoy the time that I'm in the studio. So really,

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the only reminder I have about any of the recordings is usually through somebody else.

GL But it was your debut album. Didn't that make it special?

SLASH It was the first extended studio effort that we'd done collectively, so that in itself was a gas. At the same time, there was so much else going on. I was staying out till four in the morning, getting to the studio at least by noon. And I wasn't living anywhere, so I was a complete vagabond during the making of *Appetite*. There was a lot of craziness and partying going on—all of the stuff that comes with being a rock and roll band that has no idea where it's going. We did everything we wanted to do and got away with whatever it was we could get away with. So looking back on it now, it's like, yeah, that was totally cool. I wouldn't have missed a minute of it.

GL Were there any templates you were holding up back then, saying, "If I could make an album like this, I'd be happy"?

SLASH No. Everyone else might have a different story, but I'm only speaking on my behalf. From the time the band started, it's always had a chemistry. Everybody played what they thought needed to be incorporated into the music; everybody always came up with their own ideas. Nobody really asked a lot of questions. We just had an unspoken chemistry—a natural feel for knowing where to put a part. There wasn't a lot of sitting around and looking to the future as far as how big a hit this was going to be. We just incorporated what we each liked as individuals into the songs.

GL Did the band feel unified at that point?

SLASH We were the only five guys who could have made up that band in the whole of L.A., especially at that point in time. The Eighties was probably one of the worst decades of all time for music. [*laughs*]

GL Disposable pop and cookie-cutter metal bands.

SLASH Exactly. We hated everything that was going on everywhere, so we ended up falling together. It was sort of a fluke how it happened, but it was inevitable, because individually, we couldn't pair up with anyone else—we each had our own personal direction. We all eventually got together, and that was the only combination that worked. Against all odds, we went headlong into this thing. But it wasn't preconceived—that's just who we were. When we went in to do the album, we just wanted to make our album and be good at what we did.

GL But were you reacting against how plastic music had become?

SLASH No, it wasn't that. It was just that, given the time period, what we did was very much against the grain. And we enjoyed the static. [*laughs*]

GL Your playing was more raw, melodic and bluesy than the fleet-fingered style that dominated the L.A. hair-metal scene back then. What were some of the reactions to your style?

SLASH I wasn't riding anybody's opinion. It wasn't until much later that I got recognized as a half-decent guitar player. But in the Hollywood scene, we were such a brash band that the whole thing was overwhelming. I just liked to play what I liked to play. As long as I thought I was playing well, I didn't really give a shit what anyone was thinking. But I've always been very paranoid about the quality of my playing. I'm one of those guys who always asks afterward, "Did I play okay?" But I wasn't judging my playing by anyone else's standards but my own. I didn't have any convoluted dreams about being a guitar hero.

GL But you became one anyway.

SLASH There was a point when I started getting phone calls to do magazine interviews. And then at another level, me and Axl got the lead singer/lead guitarist combo thing going that was very recognizable. From that point on, I started to get recognized as a guitar player, which was very flattering. I appreciate the fact that I've done pretty well for myself in the context of being one-fifth of a cool rock and roll band.

GL How difficult was it to get the band's sound on tape?

SLASH Capturing it properly was a hard thing to do, because it was very raw, and we didn't want to use a lot of effects and other stuff to embellish it too much. At the same time, we did have a certain amount of professional integrity, and we wanted it to sound tight. There are a lot of bands that try to sound unhinged. We were unhinged, but we also liked to tie it together enough to keep it from exploding all over the place. So it always had that sound where it was just about to fall apart, but it was a little tight at the same time.

GL What was your daily routine like at that time?

SLASH My existence has always been that detached gypsy kind of thing—very focused around my music, but as far as everything else, very detached. I'd work until 11 or 12 at night and then hit the street, find a place to hang out, find a place to sleep and then find a way to get back to the studio the next morning. That was the making of the whole record.

GL Would you indulge at all when you were recording?

SLASH There was a little of everything within reason [*laughs*], but it wasn't as excessive during the actual recording process, because as soon as you couldn't play well, then the whole point of being around ceased to exist. So in the studio, maybe a little Jack and coffee. [*laughs*] But after a day's work, it was go-for-broke. And then the next day, you just showed up at the studio on time, and no one had anything to say, as long as it didn't affect your performance.

> ***"We did everything we wanted to do and got away with whatever it was we could get away with."*** —Slash

GL So where did it start to go wrong?

SLASH First there was Steven [*Adler, the band's first drummer, who was let go for excessive drug abuse*]. That was a big change, but we survived it. But that still had a big effect on the camaraderie of a bunch of guys who—I hate to sound cliché—really came from the gutter. But it was hard, because I was only 20 and Steven was only 21 when the band really started. We had professional ethics, but at the same time, we were a crazy bunch of kids. Trying to keep a tab on any one of us

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was difficult. [*laughs*] We just knew when we had to show up for work, but after work...God knows what was going on.

So when we buckled down to do *Use Your Illusion* [I *and* II], [*former Cult drummer*] Matt Sorum came in, and he was just like the rest of us, so that was cool. And then we're doing this whole double-record thing because we had so much material. And then we had all these huge shows coming up, so it's like we were touring during the making of the record. There was a lot going on, so we were out for two-plus years on those albums.

Then Izzy left, and a lot of that had to do with the excessive shit happening on the road—going on late, and riots, and that kind of stuff. We were a really simple band from the start. We really looked forward to getting up and playing every night—that's what we're all about—but when that started to get complicated for reasons that didn't have anything to do with the rest of us, it put a strain on the band.

It wasn't a "success kills" kind of story; it's just that what Axl had originally planned for us started to become something that none of us knew anything about. [*laughs*] So when the tour was over, I looked at what was going on, and I realized I felt very estranged. What bound us together was really lacking as soon as we were missing a couple guys. You just can't reinvent something like that.

We tried to hang in there as long as possible, but Axl was going in a musical direction that none of us could fathom. Eventually, it just wasn't fun for me, and I finally left. And consequently Duff left, and Matt got fired. Now Axl is doing Guns on his own. I have no regrets about the whole thing, because it was a slow, systematic thing that went on.

GL But musically, at least, something good came out of Axl's temperamental side.

SLASH Oh yeah. He's one of the most brilliant lyricists. He's got so much going on, and he's really an intelligent, amazing guy. It's just...it depends how much of that [*emotional baggage*] you want to experience with him. A lot of it is stuff that not everyone in the band necessarily understands. So you try to understand and you try to be a good friend and bandmate as you go through it, but when it negatively affects everything the band is doing, it's really hard to stand by him.

I'm also interested to hear the new Guns record because so much has gone on since this whole thing started—I know he's got a lot to say. Even a lot of his stage performance is fueled by angst. And it's essential to have that sort of soul and energy for the music to come across as genuine; that's an integral part of rock and roll. But it just depends on how far you want to take it. It's like, if you can get it all out of your system in the two hours you're onstage, great. As long as you're onstage. [*laughs*]

GL You've been jamming with Izzy again. [*This interview took place in Spring 2002.*] Any new perspective on why your playing styles work so well together?

SLASH It's the kind of thing where, no matter who comes up with the initial idea, I never really have to go, "Izzy, play this part this way." He just plays his thing his own way, and we never really talk about it much.

Last night, we went in and took basic chord changes and worked them into full songs. That's one of the things about me and Izzy working together: he knows where I'm at, and I know where he's at. And that's the way it's always been. I make up something that accompanies his part and at the same time accents it, and he does the same with my parts. We have that kind of chemistry. We've always been good friends, so for us to get in a room and play is a very easy thing to do.

GL What's the strongest impression you have of your time creating *Appetite for Destruction*?

SLASH You should probably ask the rental car companies who rented us the vans we used to drive from the Valley to Hollywood and back. [*laughs*] There were a few damaged vans—we must have dropped off about three or four in the middle of the night. So many rental places were pissed off and ready to sue, except there was no entity to sue, really. That's what that album was about: an appetite for destruction. It was us against the world, and it was a really cool time, because we pulled it off. *GL*

ROSS HALFIN

Good Times, Bad Times

The greatest guitar stories ever told.

GUITAR LEGENDS #109

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE times Chuck Berry gave Keith Richards a shiner and set him on fire? How about when Ozzy Osbourne mistook Randy Rhoads for a girl? And what of the childhood events that drove Angus Young to wear those velvet shorts?

Eddie Van Halen in 1984

The world of guitar is filled with a million twisted stories, and in the following pages we have compiled some of our favorites. Some are funny, some poignant, others sick, but all are unforgettable. Black eyes, broken limbs, unusual encounters—it's the stuff that myths and legends are made of. And it's all in a day's work for the likes of Richards, Osbourne and Young...not to mention Edward Van Halen, Jimi Hendrix, Howlin' Wolf, Pete Townshend and James Hetfield.

Without further ado, *Guitar Legends* presents an incredible compendium of the most bizarre—and often pivotal—events in the annals of guitar.

HAMMER-ONS OF THE GODS

VAN HALEN DISCOVERS TAPPING

"AS FAR AS THE TAPPING thing is concerned, I never really saw anybody do it," says Edward Van Halen. "I'm not saying, 'Hey, I'm bitchin', I came up with it,' but I never really saw anybody do it before me."

Van Halen will admit, however, that the initial inspiration for his legendary two-handed technique came from a surprising source—namely, Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page. "I got the idea a long time ago while attending a 1971 Zep concert," Edward explains. "Page was playing his classic solo in the middle of 'Heartbreaker,' and all of a sudden a light bulb went off in my head. I thought, Wait a minute, he's pulling off to an open string—that's simple. Now, what if I use the finger on my right hand to pull off to a finger on my fretting hand? I could move things around and do a lot more.

"That was the beginning. I just kind of took the technique and ran with it."

But how did Ed keep tapping a secret in the years before Van Halen recorded their debut? "I remember when we first started playing original sets at the Whisky in Los Angeles, I'd turn around and keep my back to the audience when I tapped. No one could see what I was doing! My brother, Al, would always say, 'Ed, be cool, man. Don't let those mothers rip you off.' "

SHATTERED

PETE TOWNSHEND SMASHES HIS FIRST GUITAR

had acquired a reputation as the most violently aggressive guitarist on London's music scene. The way he banged his Rickenbacker around, scraped the mic stand across its strings and elicited feedback squeals from his amp shocked and delighted audiences in an era when rock bands still wore suits onstage. His creatively abusive way with the instrument reached its ultimate and inevitable climax one evening in '65, at a

NEIL ZLOZOWER (VAN HALEN)

gig in London's Railway Tavern—a venue with a particularly high stage and low ceiling. There are many versions of the story, but the best is the one Pete himself told to his friend and biographer Richard Barnes in the latter's book, *The Who: Maximum R&B*:

"I started to knock the guitar around a lot, hitting it on the amps to get banging noises and things like that, and it started to crack. It banged against the ceiling and smashed a hole in the plaster; the guitar head actually poked through the ceiling plaster. When I brought it out, the top of the neck was left behind. I couldn't believe what had happened. There were a couple of people from art school I knew at the front of the stage and they were laughing at me. One of them was literally rolling about on the floor, and his girlfriend was kind of looking at me, smirking. So I just got really angry and got what was left of the guitar and smashed it to smithereens. About a month earlier, I'd scraped together enough [*money*] for a 12-string Rickenbacker, which I only used on two or three numbers. It was lying at the side of the stage, so I just picked it up, plugged it in, gave them a sort of look and carried on playing, as if I meant to do it. The next week I went back [*to the club*] and there was a whole crowd waiting to see this lunatic break his guitar."

PAUL-VERIZED

GARY ROSSINGTON ALMOST LOSES HIS BABY

LYNYRD SKYNYRD's Gary Rossington and his 1959 Sunburst Les Paul are like father and son; he says he finds it virtually impossible to perform without his "baby." He has, in fact, used the guitar on every one of Skynyrd's albums and at all their concerts. In 1977, however, he came close to losing his beloved instrument.

"When we were recording *Street Survivors* in Miami, I got lazy and left the guitar on a stand for the night," recalls Rossington. "The next morning, I went to play it, and the whole headstock just fell right off. It was held on only by the strings." According to others who were at the sessions, someone from the night cleaning crew had accidentally knocked the guitar over and broken it, then set it back on the stand to conceal the damage. Says Rossington, "I started cryin' like a baby. The whole band freaked out, we canceled the day's sessions, and I took off walking. I got about a mile down the road when two friends came by and picked me up. They said, 'What happened back there? Your whole band is acting like they're in mourning. They're all cryin' and mopin' around.'

"So I went back, and the studio's maintenance man said, 'I got some glue—I can fix that guitar.' And I was like, 'Glue? Man, this is a precision instrument, and it's ruined. You can have it.' " Rossington was surprised when, at a later session for the album, the maintenance man returned with the guitar. "And he handed me my Les Paul—fixed perfectly."

Rossington still uses the guitar. "I was offered 30 grand for it, and I just laughed," he says. "The thing is not an investment—it's part of my arm."

HELL TO PLAY

ROBERT JOHNSON SELLS HIS SOUL

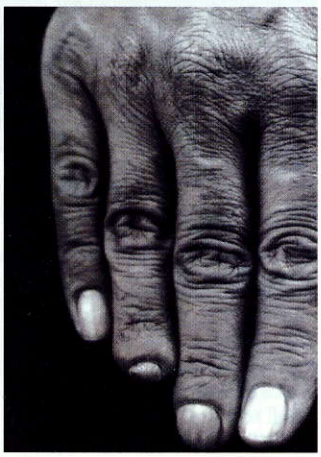
Robert Johnson was "King of the Delta Blues Singers," the artist who got under the skin and into the soul of Eric Clapton and countless other rabid devotees. Part of his appeal is romantic: according to an enduring legend, Johnson sold his soul to the devil in exchange for the spectacular guitar playing, singing and writing abilities that ultimately made him the most influential and venerated bluesman of all time.

Call it a myth, but the facts of Johnson's career and life suggest that he did, in fact, have a thing for the Evil One. There is the song "Me and the Devil Blues," not to mention the terrifying "Hellhound on My Trail." One of the bluesman's acquaintances even remembered that Robert died "crawling along the ground on all fours, barking and snapping like a mad beast."

But the most convincing evidence of Johnson's alleged pact with Satan was the supernatural speed with which he improved his guitar playing skills. Delta bluesman Son House recalled that he and another bluesman, Willie Brown, often mocked Johnson, who at the age of 20, in 1931, was a terrible guitarist who made "such a racket you never heard." One day Johnson disappeared, and when he returned a year later he had a surprise in store for the two older bluesmen. House remembered:

"All of a sudden somebody came in through the door. Who but him! He had a guitar swinging on his back... I said, 'Well, boy, you still got a guitar, huh? What do you do with that thing? You can't do nothing with it.' He said, 'Well, I'll tell you what...let me have your seat a minute.' So I said, 'All right, you better do something with it, too,' and I winked my eye at Willie [*Brown*]. So Robert sat down there and finally got started. And man! He was so good! When he finished, all our mouths were standing open."

(left) The Who's Pete Townshend has a smashing good time; (below) Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi's digital transformation



FINGERS, BLOODY FINGERS

BLACK SABBATH'S TONY IOMMI'S DARKEST HOUR

IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN one of the greatest days in young Tony Iommi's life. His band, the Rockin' Chevrolets, had just landed a tour of Germany, which meant that he could finally kiss his odious factory job goodbye. Then, out of the blue, disaster struck. On his last day at work, the guitarist caught his hand in a machine press, snipping the tips off two of his fingers in the process.

"I couldn't believe it," the Black Sabbath guitarist recalls of the 1965 incident. "I was furious, because I wasn't even going to go to work that day! My mom *made* me go. She said it was the 'responsible' thing to do.

"After the accident I thought my playing days were over, because I went to several specialists and they all said, 'Forget it.' Then a friend of mine bought me a record by [*jazz*

RAY STEVENSON / RETNA (THE WHO); DARAGH MCDONAGH / RETNA LTD. (IOMMI)

Dylan plugs in at Newport Folk in 1965

guitarist] Django Reinhardt and told me to have a listen. I said, 'He's unbelievable.' Then he told me that Django was only able to use two fingers on his fretting hand. It started me thinking, Well, if he was able to play that well with two fingers, I'm gonna have a go at it."

First he created two thimbles made of plastic and leather to extend the length of his truncated fingers. Next he detuned his guitar one half-step, to E♭, to make bending easier. Finally, he began using extremely light strings to maximize playing comfort. Ironically, the combination of these three things gave Iommi a revolutionary new sound—deep, dark and ominous. It was the guitar sound that would give birth to Black Sabbath and, ultimately, sowed the seeds for death metal, thrash and grunge.

BOOIN' IN THE WIND

BOB DYLAN GOES ELECTRIC

BOB DYLAN WAS KING of the folkies in the early Sixties, a man who moved millions with nothing more than his voice, lyrics and acoustic guitar. So it came as a shock to Dylan fans when, at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, he appeared onstage carrying the hated symbol of rock and roll—an electric guitar.

At first, the crowd simply stared as Dylan and his backup, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, rocked the house. After the third number, people began to heckle him openly. "Get rid of that guitar!" someone yelled. "Go back to the *Ed Sullivan Show*," jeered another, referring to the television variety show where British Invasion acts like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones had made their American debuts. As the derisive laughter swelled, Dylan left the stage. Peter Yarrow, of the popular folk trio Peter Paul and Mary, grabbed the microphone and pleaded for Dylan to come back, assuring the audience that the singer was "just getting his ax." When Dylan returned after several minutes, he was alone and carrying his acoustic guitar. Facing the crowd, he delivered a kiss-off: "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue," his own scornful tune about moving on and starting anew. The irony of its message was apparently lost on the now pacified audience, which applauded wildly.

SUIT TO KILL

ANGUS ADOPTS THE SCHOOLBOY LOOK

SHORTS AND BLAZER. Necktie and cap. Angus Young's schoolboy outfit is as much a part of his stylistic signature as his Gibson SG and roaring lead guitar work for AC/DC. The perfect complement to Young's diminutive frame and a hilarious sendup of macho metal guitar posturing, the school suit is recognized even by people who couldn't identify a single AC/DC song.

> *"It's not a con. When I get up there, I become that schoolboy."*
> *—Angus Young*

"It was my older sister's idea, really," says Angus of his distinctive stage getup. "When we were growing up, I'd come home from school every day and pick up my guitar without bothering to change out of my school uniform. My sister always remembered that. She'd come to call me to dinner and I'd still be in my school suit, playing away. She thought it was cute. So she was the one who said to Malcolm and me, 'You know, it would be a great thing if Angus would get up onstage with that school suit. 'Cause nobody's ever done anything like that.'

"The school suit helped people remember who we were when we were first scattering out. It gave a visual side to the band. But it's not a con. When I get up there, I become that schoolboy."

MR. MOJO WORKING

THE ROLLING STONES MEET MUDDY WATERS

MUDDY WATERS, THE ELECTRIC bluesman from Mississippi and then Chicago, gave birth to the Rolling Stones, a group of English blues wannabes. Not only did the band love and play Waters classics like "I Just Want to Make Love to You" and "I Can't Be Satisfied," but they even named themselves after one of his songs, "Rollin' Stone."

In 1965, while on their first tour of America, the Stones, already hugely popular in England, visited Chess Studios in Chicago. This was the place where not only Waters but other blues and rock greats, including Howlin' Wolf, Buddy Guy and Chuck Berry, made their seminal recordings. The Stones wanted to record a few songs and also hoped that they might catch a glimpse of one of their idols at work. They suc-

ALICE OCHS/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES (BOB DYLAN)

ceeded on both counts, though not as they anticipated.

Keith Richards later recalled: "We walked in and there's Phil Chess and Ron Malo, the engineer, and there's this black guy in white overalls painting the ceiling. As we walked by into the studio, somebody said, 'Oh, by the way, this is Muddy Waters.' I'm *dying*, right? I get to meet *The Man*—he's my fucking God—and he's painting the ceiling! And I'm going in to work in *his* studio. Ouch!

"This is the record business, right? The highs with the lows! Ooh, boy. In that one little meeting, in those few seconds, when he said, 'It's a pleasure to meet you,' Muddy taught me everything," said Keith. "The look in his eye was saying, 'Well, you can be painting the ceiling next year.' And he had no idea that we revered him—we were just another bunch of creeps."

FIRING LINE
METALLICA FIRE DAVE MUSTAINE

METALLICA ALWAYS KNEW how to party, but they also knew when to stop. Except, that is, for lead guitarist Dave Mustaine, who partied himself out of a job. On April 11, 1983, the band decided that it was time to fire Mustaine. The decision was made in part because of his increasing problem with alcohol but also because Metallica had become interested in a guitarist named Kirk Hammett, who was playing with their thrash rivals, Exodus.

Drummer Lars Ulrich remembers the split clearly. "We were having a wonderful time touring the United States in our U-Haul when we ran into some problems around Iowa and Illinois involving a drug called 'Alcohol & Dave.' Dave got really drunk. He'd probably had 15 or 20 beers and was driving the truck while we were crashed-out in the back. He almost killed us 10 or 15 times! We stopped to get something to eat, and Dave and our tour manager, Mark Whittaker, got into a heavy argument. It was obvious that Dave was in no shape to drive, so Mark made Dave crawl in the back of the van where he immediately went to sleep.

"The four of us started talking about how Dave wasn't stable enough to be happening on the road. He was a great guy, a great friend, but he just couldn't handle his liquor. So that night, just out of Chicago, we shook hands and decided this was the end, and that we'd get Kirk."

Dave Mustaine (right) counts down to extinction with Metallica at the Paramount Theater, Staten Island, April 1983

Hendrix smokes at Monterey Pop, June 18, 1967

The band members cringed at the thought of firing Mustaine, but they felt it was inevitable. But first, they had to figure some way to get him off the tour and back to their home base in San Francisco. Lars, who couldn't afford a plane ticket for Dave, bought him a Greyhound bus ticket, instead. The bus was scheduled to depart at 10 A.M., making it necessary for the band to dismiss the guitarist at the crack of dawn.

"Everybody was bummed out," recalls the drummer. "It was such a weird scene. We tapped him on the shoulder at 8 A.M., woke him up, and said, 'We've decided you're not in the band anymore.' Dave looked around the room and said, 'Oh, no!' He probably thought he was dreaming. After 10 or 15 minutes of our telling him why we wanted him out, he realized he wasn't gonna get us to change our minds. And then he made the statement of the year: 'Okay, when does my plane leave?' "

BLITZKRIEG BOPPERS
THE BIRTH OF THE RAMONES

ON JANUARY 23, 1974, an unemployed, 22-year-old construction worker named John Cummings and his buddy Doug Colvin took the subway in from Queens, New York, and walked into Manny's Guitar Center on West 48th Street, just off Times Square in Manhattan. There they purchased their first guitars, with John buying a blue Mosrite for $50 and Doug going for a $50 Danelectro bass. John, who'd just been laid off, thought it might be fun to start a band with some of his friends while collecting unemployment.

Most loud rock guitarists in those days played with their arms, but Cummings quickly developed a personal guitar style that relied on what he called a "limp wrist action"—all downstrokes and barre chords. No one was around to teach him leads, and he didn't feel as if the revved-up, three-chord rock his band was writing needed solos anyway.

A few months later, on August 16 and 17, 1974—with their friend Jeffrey Hyman on vocals and Tommy Erdelyi, who owned their rehearsal space, on drums—the group played its first gigs at a dingy bar called CBGB, on New York City's Skid Row. Only now, they were using their new stage names—Johnny, Dee Dee, Joey and Tommy Ramone.

Club owner Hilly Kristal recalled, "They did their famous 17-minute set: 20 songs in 17 minutes, performed very loud with loads of energy, from one to another to another. Nobody had ever done that before. It was like hitting people over the head, but by the time you were screaming, 'I can't take it any more!' they were finished."

BURN, BABY, BURN!
JIMI HENDRIX SETS MONTEREY POP ON FIRE

AT THE 1967 MONTEREY Pop Festival, Jimi Hendrix anointed himself king of rock guitar and high priest of spectacular showmanship. The significance of these events increase exponentially when you consider that he has never relinquished these titles.

What was officially known as the First International Pop Festival in Monterey took place on June 16 through 18 of that year. The lineup was as stellar as it was diverse. The Who, the Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, Otis Redding, Ravi Shankar, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Mike Bloomfield's Electric Flag, Buffalo Springfield and Canned Heat all were on the bill, and several established their careers with their performances.

But no act was as highly

KEVIN HODAPP FRANK WHITE PHOTO AGENCY (METALLICA); JIM MARSHALL (HENDRIX)

anticipated as the Jimi Hendrix Experience. Hendrix, who had moved to England at the urging of his manager, Chas Chandler, formed the Experience with a British rhythm section that consisted of bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell. The trio had quickly become the sensation of London and was now returning to America specifically to play Monterey. He hoped the festival would jump-start his career in the U.S.

It was Paul McCartney who recommended both Hendrix and the Who to the festival's promoters. In doing so, he inadvertently touched off a backstage "battle" between Jimi and Pete Townshend over who would go on first. Ordinarily, bands vie for the "headline" prestige of going on last. But since both groups smashed their instruments as a finale—a routine that Hendrix had appropriated from Townshend—whoever played second ran the risk of coming off as a major anti-climax. To settle the dispute, festival organizer John Phillips of the Mamas and the Papas tossed a coin. Hendrix lost. He would have to play after the Who. "If we're going to follow you," he reportedly told Townshend, "I'm going to pull out all the stops."

The Rolling Stones' Brian Jones introduced Hendrix to the audience, hailing him as "the most exciting performer I've ever heard." Dressed in a frilly shirt, second-skin red pants and a feather boa, Jimi didn't make a liar of Jones. The assembled love children had never experienced anything like his otherworldly guitar tones or unabashedly sexual stage moves. Visibly nervous, yet comically loose, Jimi played his guitar with his teeth, behind his neck and between his legs, humping his Marshall stacks and offering up tripped-out, stream-of-consciousness raps between songs. The set was a mixture of Hendrix's own compositions including "Foxy Lady" (already a hit single in Britain) and "The Wind Cries Mary"—and such well-chosen covers as Billy Roberts' "Hey Joe," Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone" and the Troggs hit, "Wild Thing."

That last song closed the set. At its conclusion, Hendrix flung his colorfully hand-painted Stratocaster down on the stage, straddled the instrument and, holding a can of cigarette lighter fuel at crotch level, proceeded to eject flammable fluid all over the body and neck. Once he'd set fire to the guitar, he smashed it against his amp and threw bits of charred wood into the crowd.

The stunned hipsters lucky enough to be in that audience were the first Americans to behold the Hendrix phenomenon. Pete Johnson, a *Los Angeles Times* reporter covering the festival, wrote, "When Jimi left the stage, he graduated from rumor to legend."

Brian May fires up his homemade Red Special

"My shirt's on fire!"
–Keith Richards

GOT WOOD?

THE ORIGIN OF BRIAN MAY'S RED SPECIAL

QUEEN EXPLODED ONTO the rock scene in 1973 with a distinctive look, a brilliant singer and Brian May, who produced an instantly identifiable sound with his extremely unusual guitar. While his contemporaries all favored factory-built Gibsons or Fenders, May's instrument of choice was his homemade Red Special.

"By the time I was 17," May recalls, "I had already figured out how to wind a pickup for myself. I stuck it on this acoustic guitar that I had, and I was off. When it came time to build my guitar, I knew what I wanted—a guitar that would sing and have a lot of warmth to it, but also a nice articulating edge. When my dad and me designed the guitar, we had that in mind. We tried to design a solidbody guitar that had all the advantages of a hollowbody—the ability to feed back in just the right way."

The Red Special is a living, breathing monument to May and his father's inventive domestic craftsmanship. The spring in the vibrato tailpiece was scavenged from a motorcycle kickstand, the fret buttons were fashioned from old pearl buttons and the oak body responsible for May's smoldering tone on such Queen classics as "Bohemian Rhapsody" and "We Are the Champions" came from a 500-year-old fireplace mantel.

MEDICINE SHOW

DUANE ALLMAN LEARNS HOW TO PLAY SLIDE

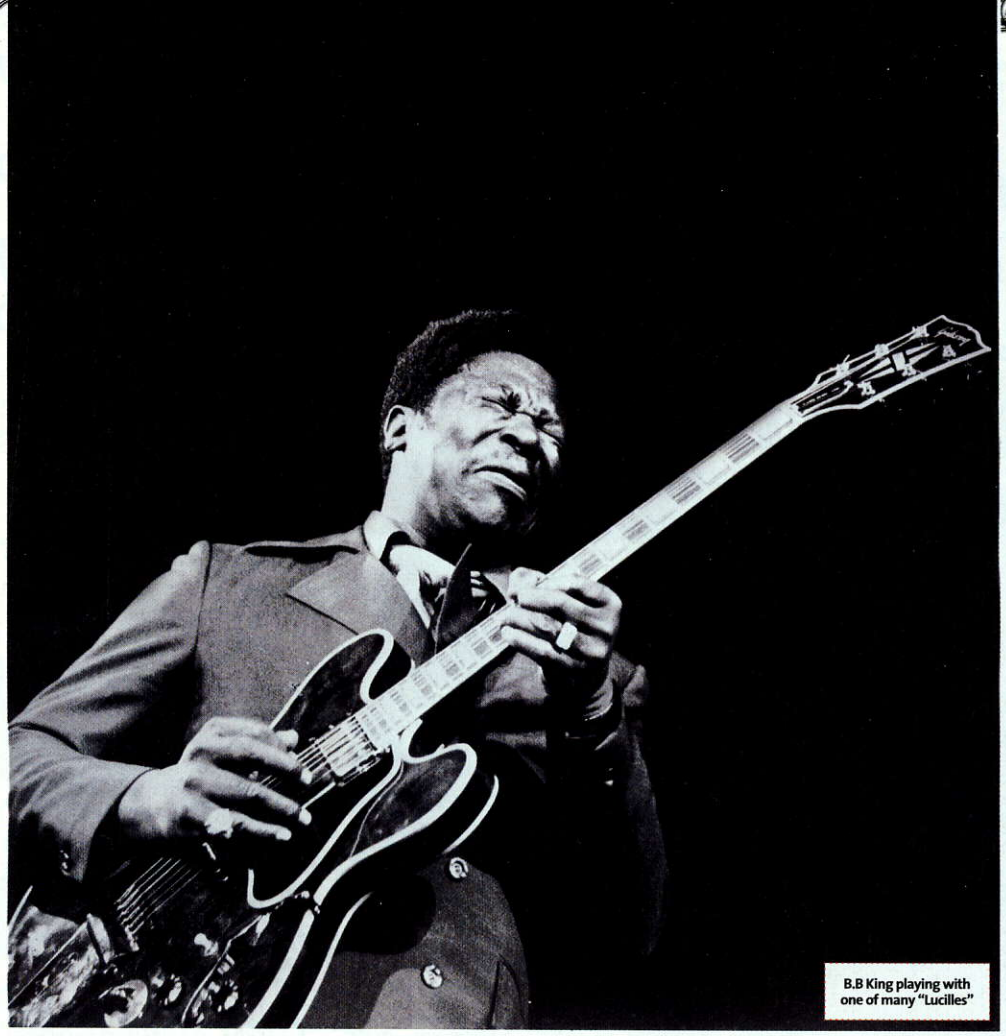
BEFORE DUANE ALLMAN, electric slide playing was mostly a matter of rehashing the chord-based triplet made famous by bluesman Elmore James in his signature tune, "Dust My Broom." Duane left "Broom" in the dust with his huge tone, horn-like phrasing and extended improvisations. Incredibly, he only learned how to play slide guitar in 1967—just two years before the release of the Allman Brothers Band's self-titled debut.

Duane's great bottleneck awakening happened when he and his brother, Gregg, were living in West Hollywood, California, with their band, the Hourglass. One day, Gregg decided to go horseback riding. Duane, nursing a bad cold, didn't want to go, but Gregg convinced him to come along. Duane was thrown from his horse and sprained his wrist. The guitarist, Gregg later recalled, went home with a sore arm—and nursing a mighty grudge against his younger brother.

The Allmans did not speak for several days, and then Gregg, in an attempt to mend fences, bought Duane some Coricidin, a cold medicine, and a new album by the Rising Sons, a band featuring Taj Mahal and Ry Cooder. Duane loved the album, especially "Statesboro Blues," a blues standard that featured Cooder's slide work.

"I heard Ry Cooder playing slide and I said, 'Man, that's for me!' " Duane said in a 1971 interview. Using the empty Coricidin bottle as a slide, Duane began playing along with the record. But, he recalled, he didn't immediately master the technique: "I went around the house for about three weeks saying, 'Hey, man. This is a gas!' But everyone would look at me, thinking, Oh no! He's getting ready to do it again, and just lower their heads, as if to say, 'Get it over with, quick!' Then I got a little better at it. Now everybody's blowing my slide playing out of proportion. It's just fine for me as a relief from the other kind of playing. But it's just guitar playing."

BARRY SCHULTZ / SUNSHINE / RETNA (MAY)



B.B King playing with one of many "Lucilles"

FLYING HIGH AGAIN

OZZY AUDITIONS RANDY RHOADS

WHEN OZZY OSBOURNE was fired from Black Sabbath in 1979, he was suddenly forced to put together his own band. "It was a shock because Sabbath had always been there," Ozzy recalled later. "I had never auditioned anyone before, so I was petrified.

"The auditioning process was so embarrassing. Back then, everyone was trying to clone Jimi Hendrix; I heard nothing but 'Purple Haze' and 'Foxy Lady' riffs. It was a nightmare!

"I had almost given up when somebody told me about this great guitar player in town named Randy Rhoads. Shortly afterward, Randy came over to my Los Angeles apartment. He was so frail, tiny and effeminate that I thought he was a girl. But out of politeness, I invited him to play the next day.

"Unfortunately, when he turned up, I was stoned out of my mind—I mean, I was on another planet! Some guy woke me up and said, 'He's here.' I looked up and Randy started playing from this tiny amp. Even in my semi-consciousness, he blew my mind. I told him to come by the next day, and that he had the gig.

"The next day I told someone I dreamed that I'd hired a guitar player. They told me I didn't dream it, and that he was coming that day. I thought, 'Oh God, what have I done? I hope he can play.'

"Randy turned out to be very instrumental in bringing me out of me. My first two albums with him are by far the greatest things I've ever done. He was too good to last."

MANIC IMPRESSION

JIMI HENDRIX MEETS HOWLIN' WOLF

THE LEGENDARY CHICAGO blues singer Howlin' Wolf and his guitarist, Hubert Sumlin, exerted an enormous influence on a wide variety of rock greats, including Eric Clapton (who recorded Wolf's version of "Spoonful" and "Sitting on Top of the World" with Cream), the Rolling Stones ("Little Red Rooster") and the Doors ("Back Door Man"). Sumlin, master of the perfectly placed bent note and one of the first exponents of distortion, was a particular favorite of Jimi Hendrix, whose version of Wolf's "Killin' Floor" appears on both *Live at Winterland* and *Stages*. Sumlin recalls the first time he and his imposing, six-foot-six, 300-pound boss met the young Jimi:

"He was just a little ol' dude living in England. It was before his band, the Experience, hit it big. We played in Liverpool, the Beatles' home, and in walked this little ol' hip guy wearing earrings and a bandanna. Wolf said, 'What the fuck is this guy? I ain't saying nothing to that motherfucker.'

"He came right up to Wolf and asked if he could play his guitar. Wolf just nodded and Hendrix picked it up, turned it over and played it with his teeth. Wolf looked at him big-eyed, and said, 'You hired, man, you hired!' Jimi said, 'No thank you, Mr. Wolf. But I admire you and the blues. You guys are 100 percent. Beautiful, man.' "

PLAYING WITH FIRE

CHUCK BERRY TORCHES KEITH RICHARDS

THE ROLLING STONES' Keith Richards is probably Chuck Berry's biggest fan. The feeling, however, is not necessarily mutual. In 1983, for instance, Richards went to see his hero in concert at the Ritz in New York City. After performing, Berry waited for a car by the backstage exit. Richards approached, tapped him on the shoulder and said, "Hey, Berry, don't rush off." Berry spun around and promptly cold-cocked his hapless disciple. Said Keith later, "I was just proud I didn't go down." He did, however, receive a prodigious black eye.

Several months later, Keith told *Beggars' Banquet*, the Stones' fan magazine, "I flew to L.A. one night, and who do I see sittin' on his suitcase, waitin' for his car, but Chuck Berry, who I haven't seen since he blacked my eye out at the Ritz. Chuck says, 'I'm sorry, I didn't know it was you I hit, my nerves were flying,' and we're talkin' while he's waitin' for his car and he gives me his phone number. At the same time, he lights a cigarette and drops it down my shirt and almost burns my stomach open! My shirt's on fire!

"Every time him and me get in contact, I wind up wounded, whether it's intentional or not. But, I mean, if somebody's gonna do it to me, I'm glad it's him."

HOT LICKS

WHY B.B. KING CALLS ALL OF HIS GUITARS "LUCILLE"

THE YEAR WAS 1949, and B.B. King, then a 24-year-old budding blues guitar star, was performing at a bar in Twist, Arkansas. Suddenly, two drunken patrons began arguing and soon came to blows; their flailing knocked over a kerosene lamp which quickly set the building ablaze. The bar's terrified patrons poured out onto the street.

King, who in his flight from the flames left his guitar behind him, realized that he could not spare the $30 to purchase a new instrument, so he raced into the bar to retrieve his well-worn ax. Although he did rescue the guitar, the young bluesman almost lost his life in the process; the building collapsed, killing two men, moments after he escaped.

When King learned that the brawl had been over a woman named Lucille, he decided to name his guitar, and every guitar he would ever own, after the incendiary woman, in order "to remind myself never to be foolish like that again as long as I lived." *GL*

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES (KING)

El Loco

Billy Gibbons recalls three decades of Texas excess.

By Alan Paul

Gibbons (right) and bassist Dusty Hill at Rodeo Houston, March 2003

"LA GRANGE"

TRES HOMBRES (1973)

"THAT IS A 1955 STRAT with a stop tailpiece straight into a 1969 Marshall Super Lead 100. That fuzz sound in the lead and in the front and back end of the composition is just pure tube distortion. Pickup settings account for the different tones. The opening part was played on what we used to call 'the mystery setting' in the dark days before the existence of the five-way toggle switch, when finding that perfect 'tweener [*in-between setting of a three-way pickup selector*] required dedication.

"That Marshall amp, which was a trusted friend through the first six records, was an import brought over by Jeff Beck's tech at the time. I had four of those babies, and they were my main road amps for years. I ran them through cabinets with those [*Celestion*] Greenback speakers. They still retain a distinctive, rich, enjoyable tone and are well worth owning. I must, however, advise anyone fortunate enough to find one to beware of the variable power plugs. The 220[*-volt*] setting doesn't work very well outside of the 220 countries, as I can tell you from experience. We had more than a few paper-clip nights over the years [*due to blown fuses*]."

"TUSH"

FANDANGO! (1975)

"OUR FIRST THREE ALBUMS were recorded exclusively at the Robin Hood Studios outside of Dallas, and the special sound that always seemed to be accessible there was due in part to the fact that the equipment was nailed to the floor and nothing ever moved, so you could always count on a sound. Quite a good sound, I must say.

" 'Tush' was Pearly Gates, my beloved Les Paul, played through the same Marshall Super Lead, and we sure enough did stop and enjoy the G tuning for the composition's slide element. This song was largely straight guitar to amp, but I also utilized a real odd, esoteric device called the Cooper Time Cube, which was a simplistic application of the complex world of physics. In a small rack-mounted can sits a small speaker, right up next to maybe 50 feet of one-inch rubber tubing, which is coiled, spring-like. The sound waves actually take longer to travel, having to make these corners, creating a type of delay which is quite unlike the familiar sound of a digital delay. That was a real left-field piece of gear which they had—and still have, I might add—in that studio. Some of the guitar sounds that appear to be doubled on the early albums are actually the byproduct of that odd-ball Cooper Time Cube."

"I'M BAD, I'M NATIONWIDE"

DEGUELLO (1979)

"WE WROTE THIS about the great Texas bluesman Joey Long, a Gulf Coast lead-guitar picker who appeared on a great number of wonderful records by the likes of Slim Harpo and Barbara Lynn. He played on Lynn's great hit record 'We Got a Good Thing Going,' which was covered by the Stones, and which was really one of the important recordings that shaped my understanding of where it was I wanted to go with my life. It was good. And so was he.

"Joey loaned me a multi-stringed mandolin-like instrument from Parral, Mexico, and I put it to good use on 'Nationwide.' If you listen closely, you can hear close-miked mandolin-sounding rhythm accompaniment. The lead track was played on a custom-made, half-size, real short-scaled guitar tuned to G. It was actually standard tuning cranked up a minor third, which remained quite playable thanks to the guitar's short scale.

"The song's tail end alternates between three distinct effects created by two pedals: an Echoplex doubler and a Maestro octave box alternating every third bar between having the octave up and the octave down. The song also contains some Hohner Clavinet, which was owned by one of our famous Memphis pals, Carlos De Marlos. It's such an interesting sound that it ignited Dusty's [*Hill, bassist*] interest in learning some keyboard skills, and it was he who subsequently handled all the tickling of the ivories."

"CHEAP SUNGLASSES"

DEGUELLO

"THIS SONG WAS actually written during a trip from the Gulf Coast up to Austin, Texas. A bright spot of creativity flared as we were passing the hamlet of La Grange, and I recited all three verses of 'Cheap Sunglasses' within the space of 20 miles. And that's the way they stayed. Though that may sound simplistic, the lyrics speak for themselves. 'Simplistic' is indeed a word which may come to the minds of some.

"The lead track was performed on a fake Fender guitar, which I used for its wiggle stick—there is a little dive bomb in the solo section. I played it through a Marshall Major, a short-lived 200-watt beast, which had one blown tube, hence the rather bulbous, rotund sound. There's also a little bit of digital delay for that Bo Diddley impersonation at the tail out, and a Maestro Ring Modulator, which produces the strange tag to each verse. It appears three times, and it's a pretty funny sound. That is one insane effect put to good use." *GL*

JUSTIN BORUCKI

Jethro Tull in the early Seventies, with Ian Anderson and Martin Barre (second and third from left, respectively)

From Roots to Branches

Exploring Jethro Tull's 40-year family tree of mystical rock greats with guitarists Ian Anderson and Martin Barre.

JETHRO TULL'S ONGOING standing as a vibrant and enduring live band is no doubt due to its remarkable ability to navigate complex song arrangements while maintaining a wildly paganistic, theatrical edge. How else to explain the fact that, after nearly three decades as one of rock's most prolific outfits, Tull continues to play to houses packed with loyal legions of fans? The band's basketful of classic rock hits recorded during its high-water mark in the Seventies certainly hasn't hurt, either: songs like "Aqualung," "Bungle in the Jungle" and "Thick as a Brick" are all staples of the live show. Indeed, Tull has taken great pains to only play songs that work well in a concert setting, as elfin frontman and troubadour *non pareil* Ian Anderson explains: "In most cases, my favorite Jethro Tull songs will be determined by how I feel about them as live performance songs, not by the recorded identity."

While the band is more often recognized by Anderson's signature flute-playing abilities and the aforementioned legendary tunes, an underappreciated facet of the Jethro Tull experience is the guitar finesse exhibited by founder Anderson and co-guitarist Martin Barre, the latter of whom has been with the band almost since the beginning—a remarkable feat considering that no fewer than 22 different players have come through Tull's ranks. These two exceptional guitarists are unsung heroes of the instrument, song-stalwarts whose trademark is to leave flashy, self-indulgent guitar pyrotechnics out of their repertoire and stick to the composition at hand.

Guitar Legends recently caught up with Tull's twin guitar pillars to discuss the intricacies behind their catalog of greats. As Anderson explains, his creative spark hasn't waned over the years; in fact, rather than fall into stale songwriting patterns, he has never deviated from his own ruggedly individualistic path—and if that means the hit-song days are long gone, at least Jethro Tull has stayed true to its vision.

"Most people, from their second album on, find it much harder to be as spontaneously creative as they were with their first couple of records," says Anderson, "and some people only have one thing that they do. Not to be mean about it, but some great rock and rollers, like Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry, are pretty one-dimensional."

"WE USED TO KNOW"

STAND UP (1969)

IAN ANDERSON We hadn't played that song live since the Isle of Wight festival in 1970, but we've started playing it again recently. When we were in the studio recording it and I strummed up my acoustic guitar and Martin added his

G. HANEKROOT / SUNSHINE / RETNA

bit, it never occurred to me that what we were playing would eventually form the basis of [*the Eagles'*] "Hotel California." The melody is not anything like "Hotel California," of course, but when you actually get to the chord sequence, the way in which the thing harmonically progresses, it is actually the verse of "Hotel California." The Eagles *were* opening up for Jethro Tull around that time. However, "Hotel California" is a very, very popular song and "We Used to Know" remains an obscure album track.

MARTIN BARRE We were going for something that we could use as a climax to the live show, an encore or the last number with a big solo. The guitar solo was all done in one take—I just went for broke. In those days I never really sat down and worked out the implications of chord changes. I just played by ear; sometimes I'd get lucky and hit a note that worked and on another take it might be a disaster. I suppose all that early emphasis on solos was a hangover from the jazz era where everybody had their solos. In some ways, it reflects on how boring the music was—but we got away with it.

"BOUREE"

STAND UP

ANDERSON I was fortunate enough to hear "Bouree" daily through the floor, because a music student was busy practicing on his classical guitar downstairs from me, so it was kind of stuck in my brain when I was looking for an instrumental piece to play in 1969. We had quite a lot of different arrangements of that piece, but I don't necessarily remember exactly where it all fits in, especially since some of it is, shall we say, improvisation. I'm really not convinced about all that reading and writing stuff. I suspect that it's the same with a lot of people who have a temperament better suited to just getting on with it and playing by ear and trial and error. Given the option, I think I would rather learn by ear than off the page.

"TO CRY YOU A SONG"

BENEFIT (1970)

ANDERSON I know Martin always likes playing that, but Martin likes

a lot of the pieces from the *Benefit* album. He and I played harmony guitar on that. Basically, it was just a riff piece that I came up with and said, "Here, Martin, this is the riff," and just left it to him. Haven't heard that one for quite some time, actually. It's not one of my favorite songs.

BARRE The influence for that song was Blind Faith's "Had to Cry Today," although you couldn't compare the two; nothing was stolen, it was just a nice riff. The riff crossed over the bar in a couple of places and Ian and I each played guitars on the backing tracks. It was more or less live in the studio with a couple of overdubs and a solo. Ian played my Gibson SG and I played a Les Paul on it. I was playing the song on this current tour at a sound check and everybody sort of turned around and said, "What's that?" The guys in the band don't know the music from that era. It's [*Mountain guitarist*] Leslie West's favorite Jethro Tull song. I suppose if there is anybody that ever influenced me at all, West was the one. I felt if I could play like he did, I'd be very happy. *Stand Up* was a bit nerve-wracking for me, having just joined the band and sort of feeling my way, but *Benefit* was more fun. I'd become more confident by then.

> *"If there is anybody that ever influenced me at all, Leslie West was the one."*
> —Martin Barre

"SOSSITY, YOU'RE A WOMAN"

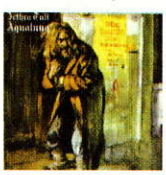
BENEFIT

BARRE "Sossity" had two guitar parts and was the first time Ian and I played together. I remember it very well and which guitar I played—an old Echo acoustic. We played together on that and on "Nothing to Say." We sat in the studio—I played fingerstyle guitar and Ian played with a plectrum.

"AQUALUNG"

AQUALUNG (1971)

BARRE In the case of that album, things were very difficult



and very tense, but at the end of the day, it was an important album. I think the songs were so good that it really carried the album through. Ian wrote all of it inasmuch as he wrote the riff and the verses. The form was just verse-riff and he had the lyrics. We needed a guitar solo, so I said, "Why don't we just base it on the chords of the verse, but break it down into half-time, then do a sort of round sequence to do a solo over?" And it worked well. While I was doing the solo, which was going really well, Jimmy Page walked into the control room and started waving. I thought, Should I wave back and mess up the solo or should I just grin and carry on? Being a professional to the end, I just grinned.

"THICK AS A BRICK"

THICK AS A BRICK (1972)

ANDERSON That was something that derived from things I was

fiddling around with while I was on tour in the U.S. I had just purchased my first Martin guitar, and I'm playing it on the song. A small-bodied guitar lends itself—because of its wider fretboard—to the style of playing that allows you space between the strings—they are easily picked. A lot of people sort of assumed that it was a fingerpicking style, but in fact, it was all just played literally as single notes from a plectrum. The album itself was a response to the critical assumption that *Aqualung* had been a concept album, which it was not, although clearly, there were a few songs that did hang together. *Thick* was a deliberate attempt to come up with what Saddam Hussein might have referred to as "the mother of all concept albums." It was all delivered tongue-in-cheek, particularly in terms of its live performance. We delivered it in a way in which people were clearly not quite sure whether it was a very serious exercise or whether it was a bit of light comedy. In truth, it was both of those things.

BARRE There were a lot of songs on that album that we just tied together. We would rehearse a song and then do a link which would go to the next song. I remember staying up working on that album until four or five in the morning, getting a few hours of sleep and then starting again. Very often Ian would come in not knowing what the next piece of music was going to be and we'd just sit down and do it. He'd say, "Got an idea for the next bit?" Other people added ideas and lots of things that John Evan came up with on Hammond organ became classic Tull bits. It was the most difficult music we had played up to that point, as there were lots of odd bars and time signatures.

"MINSTREL IN THE GALLERY"

MINSTREL IN THE GALLERY (1975)

BARRE I'd write a guitar solo for each year, so I wrote one for the

Passion Play tour which ended up being tacked on at the beginning of "Minstrel." The thing about those solos is that they got better as we went along. It was all right for the time, but I'm glad I moved on.

"SALAMANDER"

TOO OLD TO ROCK AND ROLL (1976)

ANDERSON It employs one of those hybrid tunings, not really an

open tuning, but it has a number of open strings which allows you to play things that you can't play with a regular E tuning. It was one of the rare occasions when Martin and I actually sat down in a studio and played live acoustic guitar together. The only problem is that you don't have a lot of time in concert to fiddle with tuning up, because it isn't just the question of dropping the pitch of a couple of strings. If you do that on any guitar you have to re-tune everything—you change the tension of the untouched strings by virtue of reducing the tension of the strings you are detuning. So it's not just a 10-second operation, you're looking at 30-40 seconds to retune two guitars and our band is not very well known for being able to cover for each other while tuning.

BARRE It's a very difficult piece of music. I remember Ian suggested we do it on a tour. I spent two whole days learning it, because it's an open tuning and I didn't know which one it was. It's not a normal one. It took me hours to work out. I tried three or four tunings before I got it right and then I had to learn it. The result was the best thing we did together. *GL*

Smashes, Thrashes And Hits

Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley reflect on two decades of Kiss klassics.

"DEUCE"

KISS (1974)

GENE SIMMONS That was the first song I ever wrote for Kiss; it was thrown together in about half an hour. I ripped off the lick from "Bitch" by the Rolling Stones and changed it so it starts in A and goes to a C. I purposely set out to create a repetitive lick, like in "[*(I Can't Get No)*]Satisfaction" or "Bitch." Lyrically, I had the slight thread of a story line, but I was more concerned with conveying attitude than making sense of the word "deuce." I'm not quite sure what the line "You know your man is working hard, he's worth a deuce!" means, but it sounded right.

"STRUTTER"

KISS

PAUL STANLEY This was one of the first songs I ever wrote for Kiss. It started with an old chord progression Gene had written five or six years earlier for a song called "Stanley the Parrot," which, by the way, had nothing to do with me. [*laughs*] We sped the "Parrot" song up and gave it a Stones-ish strut, hence the name. At that point I was using a Les Paul TV model. I was already real keen on vintage guitars—although my extremely limited finances meant that I could only afford one guitar at a time. So I went from a Les Paul SG that I bought for $120 in a pawn shop to a double-cutaway Les Paul Special that cost about $200.

"C'MON AND LOVE ME"

DRESSED TO KILL (1975)

STANLEY We were in L.A. on the *Hotter than Hell* tour, and the president of Casablanca Records, Neil Bogart, came to us after the show and said that *Hotter than Hell* wasn't selling anymore. He wanted us to go back to New York the next day and start working on another album. It was a real interesting concept—especially since we hadn't written any new songs yet. [*laughs*] So we packed our bags and went home, and every morning Gene and I would write. When Peter [*Criss, drums*] and Ace would show up, we'd say, "Okay, guys, here's today's song." It wasn't unusual for us to write a song in an hour and a half.

The verses to "C'mon and Love Me" were probably written in half an hour, and yet it's one of my favorite songs to this day.

ALIVE! (1975)

SIMMONS We were at the peak of our career when we recorded *Alive!*, and we knew it. *Alive!* was real, and was very much a product of its time—it wasn't just Kiss, it was the mid Seventies. People had had enough of the hippie, political thing and just wanted to rock out and have a good time.

At that time live records didn't sell, and we knew we were doing something that the industry thought was stupid. But *Alive!* changed all that. *Frampton Comes Alive* was released shortly thereafter, and then everybody started putting out live records. But we weren't aware of it as a marketing thing, it was just real—a lot like our first record. To me, it's one of the two or three records we've done that still holds up.

With anything good, there's always more than ingredients—it's how long you cook it and how hungry you are when it's ready. As much as I'd like to take all the credit for *Alive!*, it was a lot more than just Kiss. All the planets lined up, the fans were right, radio didn't matter and there were great rock and roll magazines like *Creem*. It was just a very pure, innocent time. And the music reflected that, which is why that album works so well. A lot of the musicians who are happening now wanted and needed what we gave them then. It made kids want to pick up the guitar and put a band together.

It was recorded mostly at Detroit's Cobo Hall, as well as in Wildwood, New Jersey, and Davenport, Iowa. "Detroit Rock City" was written as a result of those shows, because we did three nights in an 11,000-seater. People thought we were out of our minds for playing there, because up until then we had been playing the 5,500-seat Michigan Palace. But in those days we thought excess was best.

STANLEY We didn't think that any of the first three albums captured what we were about—being a live band. To this day, most of the studio versions pale in comparison to those on *Alive!* Our live show was akin to four people leading 12,000 in a church revival. Everybody there had tremendous commitment.

The cover of that album was shot at the Michigan Palace in Detroit. We did it in the afternoon while our crew was setting up the stage at the Cobo Hall, which is where we recorded most of the album. We wanted the perfect live shot, so we set everything up and played in an empty theater. We got our picture.

"GOD OF THUNDER"

DESTROYER (1976)

SIMMONS "By the end of [Dressed to Kill], we had gotten very used to each other's songwriting styles. Paul's songs were always a little snappier and happier, and mine were always darker and gloomier. So we'd poke fun at each other sometimes, and Paul once said to me, "Anybody can write a Gene Simmons song." To prove his point, he came back the next day with "God of Thunder." I changed some of the lyrics, and sang it.

When I first heard the song, I immediately had visions of the scene in *Fantasia* where the mountain top opens and this big winged thing is standing there—something from the dark shadows. But Paul's "God of Thunder" lyrics totally missed the point—they were all about Aphrodite and love.

The sound effect of the little kid was actually done by Bob Ezrin's two sons, who ran into the studio wearing toy helmets and carrying walkie-talkies and ray guns. The weird voice on the song is one of the kid's voices coming through a helmet, which we miked. It wasn't planned, and we had no idea what it all meant, but it seemed right. It's real *Twilight Zone* stuff—very weird.

STANLEY I won't say that Gene is lying about "God of Thunder," but it's in his nature to glamorize a story and make it more interesting than it really is. Here's the real story: I wrote that song about myself, and the original lyrics were almost identical to what was recorded. "Hear my word and take heed" was originally "We make love 'til we bleed," but that was the only thing that was changed. When I wrote it, I had every intention of singing it, but Bob Ezrin thought that it would be more appropriate for Gene to sing. Although it became known as a Gene Simmons song, it certainly wasn't written for him or as a joke.

"DETROIT ROCK CITY"

DESTROYER

STANLEY From the very beginning, the people of Detroit took us in as one of their own. While we were still an opening act in most parts of the country, we were headlining there, and I wanted to write a song about that. Then someone was hit by a car and killed outside one of our concerts in Charlotte, North Carolina. I found it very strange that somebody on his way to see something that would have been so much fun, something that was such a testament to being alive, would get killed—which is where the song's car crash intro comes from. The whole song is really about somebody getting ready to go to a concert to have a great time and ending up dying.

"CALLING DR. LOVE"

ROCK AND ROLL OVER (1976)

SIMMONS This is gonna sound warped, but "Calling Dr. Love"

started off with the title, which I stole from an episode of *The Three Stooges*. I also had that silly little word rhyme, "They call me Dr. Love/I've got the cure you're thinking of." I went into the Record Plant in New York and recorded the song as a demo, playing all the instruments myself, and then I took it to the band, and that was it.

"CHRISTINE SIXTEEN"

LOVE GUN (1977)

SIMMONS That song started as another great conversation with

Paul: "You write dumb songs!" "No, *you* write dumb songs!" Paul had stolen some of my titles, like "Black Diamond," and when he came up with the title "Christine Sixteen," I stole it. I had just discovered Van Halen, so I had Eddie and Alex play on the demo. They also played on the original demo of "Got Love for Sale."

For the spoken part in the middle that goes "When I saw you coming out of school that day, I knew I've got to have you—*got* to have you!" I always pictured myself in a black car across the street from a school, watching a young girl. [*Somebody call Child Protective Services!*]

Live in London, 1976

"I WAS MADE FOR LOVIN' YOU"

DYNASTY (1979)

STANLEY Dance music was so big at that point that every

band from the Stones on down seemed to be having hits with dance material. I would listen to it in New York clubs like Studio 54, always thinking it was very simple music and that I could write songs like that. So I went home, set my drum machine to the 126 tempo—like every damn song during that period—and worked on a chord progression with Desmond Child and Vinny Poncia. The first line of the song was "Tonight, I wanna give it all to you," which is basically what club people were thinking in those days.

We stopped playing it live in the early Eighties, but people started saying we should bring it back. We said, "Are you crazy? That's a dance song!" We finally tried it again when we were doing the Monsters of Rock tour in Europe in '89. We were ready to put the guitars up in front of our faces to keep the tomatoes from hitting us, when, instead, we had a sea of fists in the air. And this was in front of hardcore headbangers!

"A WORLD WITHOUT HEROES"

MUSIC FROM "THE ELDER" (1981)

SIMMONS That started out as a mushy Paul Stanley song—stuff

like, "With every bit of my heart, I love you and can't live without you." I just wanted to throw up in his lap. I thought the music was cool, but he was just singing about crap. So I said, "You spineless excuse for a man, you're just drooling over this girl. Have some balls! Tell her to suck your dick and fuck off!"

But I thought the chord changes were fantastic, so I started fooling around with the melody. Bob Ezrin had flown Lou Reed up, and we sat down to talk about some ideas. Lou had a scrap of paper with "a world without heroes" written on it. I asked what it was, and he said it was just an idea he had about how awful the world would be if we didn't have heroes like John Wayne, Superman or King Kong. That gave me the idea for the lyrics: "A world without heroes, is like a world without sun, you can't look up to anyone, in a world without heroes."

"CREATURES OF THE NIGHT"

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT (1982)

STANLEY We were coming off the *Music from "The Elder"* album,

which was a left turn down a very dark street for us. After that, we needed to get back home—and I think we did it with *Creatures of the Night*. It was a very heavy, dark album, and it was probably my first real declaration of who we were. There's a certain ferocity to a lot of that material, like the title track, "Danger" and "War Machine."

"DOMINO"

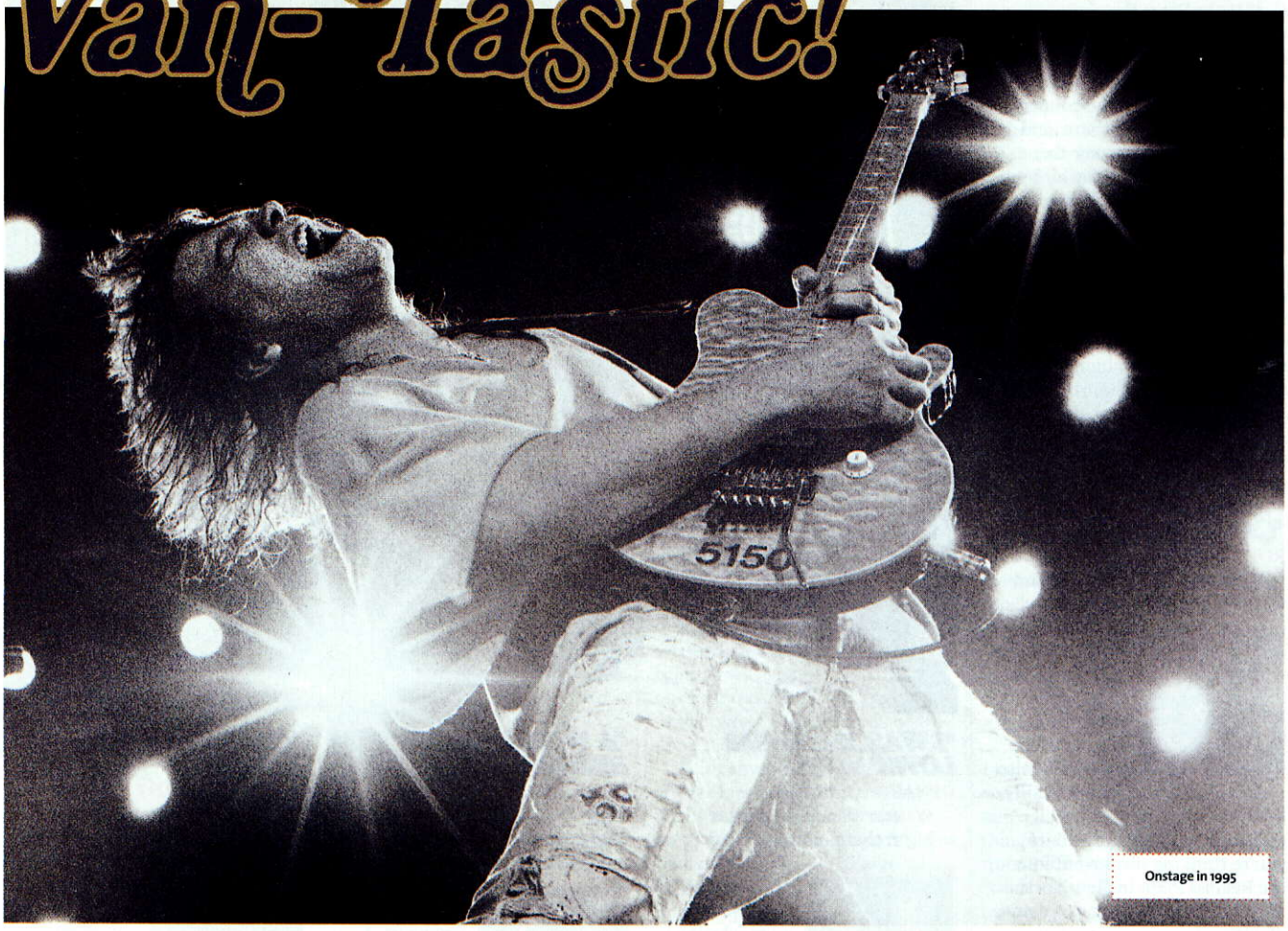
REVENGE (1992)

SIMMONS This song started out with a bass lick, much as "Deuce"

did. Once I had the meter down, I started writing rhyming words, but without a melody, so it was almost a rap. Then I talked the song through with the lick, and the melody just came naturally. The melody that came to me was the bass lick, so I just shadowed my melody with the lick on guitar. GL

MICHAEL PUTLAND / RETNACELEBS

Van-Tastic!



Onstage in 1995

King Edward on two decades' worth of Van Halen classics

"ERUPTION"

VAN HALEN (1978)

"I LIKE THE way 'Eruption' sounds. I'd never heard a guitar sound like that before—like some classical instrument.

"The story behind 'Eruption' is strange. It wasn't even supposed to be on *Van Halen*. While we were recording the album, I showed up at the studio early one day and started to warm up because I had a gig on the weekend and I wanted to practice my solo guitar spot. Our producer, Ted Templeman, happened to walk by and he asked 'What's that? Let's put it on tape!' I played it two or three times for the record, and we kept the one that seemed to flow. Ted and Donn [*Landee, engineer*] liked it, and everyone else agreed that we should throw it on. I didn't even play it right. There's a mistake at the top end of it. Whenever I hear

it, I always think, Man, I could have played that better.

"For the tail end, I used a Univox echo chamber. It had a miniature 8-track cassette in it, and the way it would adjust the rate of repeat was by the speed of the motor, and not by tape heads. So if you recorded something on the tape, the faster you played the motor back, the faster it would repeat, and vice versa. I liked some of the noises I got out of it, but its motor would always burn out.

"That first album was recorded, mixed and mastered for only $46,000, which was like an all-time low in the record industry. People couldn't believe it, because the average cost of producing an album at that time was around $150,000 or $200,000. Back then, bands like Fleetwood Mac and Boston were spending something like three years on an album, so you can just imagine the cost.

" 'Eruption,' like most of the other songs on the first album, was performed pretty much live. We had been in the studio for the first time ever about a year earlier with Gene Simmons of Kiss, and I quickly learned that I didn't like overdubbing. Simmons produced a three-song demo for us that consisted of 'Runnin' with the Devil,' 'House of Pain' and a song called 'Babe, Don't Leave Me Alone.' Gene said, 'Here's what you do in the studio—you play your rhythm parts on one track, and your solo parts on another.'

"I remember feeling very uncomfortable with separating my lead and fill parts from my rhythm parts. Onstage, I'd gotten used to doing both simultaneously. I'd just noodle in between chord lines. Because it was my first time in a recording studio, it didn't occur to me to say, 'Can't I play just the way I play live?'

"The demo didn't work out, anyway. When we finished recording with Gene, we met with Kiss' manager, Bill Aucoin. When we went to his office he was getting a shoeshine and said, "I don't see any commercial potential. Besides that, I've got my hands full because I just signed a band called Piper [*featuring a then-unknown Billy Squier*]. It was really depressing—we were

ROBERT KNIGHT / RETNA LTD.

totally bummed. Gene gave us a couple hundred bucks to make our way home. We just kept playing the Whisky and the Starwood in Los Angeles, and about a year later Warner Bros. came down and eventually signed us."

"AIN'T TALKIN' 'BOUT LOVE"

VAN HALEN

"'AIN'T TALKIN' 'Bout Love' was originally supposed to be a punk rock parody. It was a stupid thing to us, just two chords. It didn't end up sounding punk, but that was the intention. I doubled the solo section with an electric sitar. It could have been a Coral, but it looked real cheap. It looked like a Danelectro. I never really knew it was an electric sitar, because it didn't sound like one. It just sounded like a buzzy-fretted guitar. That thing was real bizarre."

"DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY"

VAN HALEN II (1979)

"I HAD THE basic riff and I played it for the guys before we went into the studio, and they didn't like it. But then I played it for Ted and he really dug it, so we worked on it and put it together in the studio. The song was originally a little different, but we cut the fat off and said, 'Let's call it "Dance the Night Away." ' I know it's not a very original title, but we wanted to cash in on the dance craze that was happening at that time.

"The main thing I remember about the second album was that I was feeling a lot of pressure. We were in England touring in support of the first album, and for the first time in my life I called a meeting and said, 'Goddammit, we have another album to do. Let's start getting together after shows or whenever we have time on the road and I'll show you what I've got.' I was really starting to worry. We weren't really working on any new material, and I was afraid if we didn't have enough strong songs our second album would flop.

"We recorded *Van Halen II* the same way we recorded the first one. We just set everything up in a big room and recorded. I was really happy with the way it turned out. It sounds like *Van Halen*, but fuller."

"AND THE CRADLE WILL ROCK"

WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST (1980)

"AL [ALEX VAN HALEN, DRUMS] and I jammed on the basic riff for 'And the Cradle Will Rock' two hours a day for two straight weeks. [*laughs*] We didn't really know what to do with it, but we were having fun because it just sounded so wicked. Then, out of nowhere, the chorus came to us and it was finished. Sometimes you really have to work for inspiration. But ultimately, it's not really work because my brother and I genuinely love to jam.

"The solo on that song is unusual. I do one short lick that's very spontaneous. It came out because I had been listening to Allan Holdsworth, who I think is the baddest. This was a first take—a bunch of songs on that album were first takes.

"That was also the first time I played keyboards in the studio. A lot of people don't know that because it doesn't really sound like a keyboard. I had an old Wurlitzer electric piano and I pumped it through my Marshalls. I just pounded on the lower registers and put it through an MXR flanger to get that weird sound. Ted said, 'Wow! What the hell is that?' [*laughs*] 'Oh, nothing, just me, screwing around.' So we recorded it. That was my first encounter with the band not wanting me to play keyboards—when we did the song live, Mike played it. They didn't want a guitar hero playing keyboards onstage.

> *"We wanted to cash in on the dance craze that was happening at that time."*
> —Eddie Van Halen

"I thought *Women and Children First* would strike people as adventurous because of songs like this and 'Could This Be Magic' and 'In a Simple Rhyme.' Everybody says *Fair Warning* was a weird album, but I think this one is weirder. Maybe *Fair Warning* felt that way because the album cover was so bizarre. I think the music on it is actually very straightforward."

"UNCHAINED"

FAIR WARNING (1981)

"I LOVE THAT SONG. It's rare that I can listen back to my own playing and get goose bumps, but that's one of them. *Fair Warning* is kind of a dark album. We started doing things my way, and we all kind of butted heads—me versus them. I remember sneaking down in the studio around four o'clock in the morning with Donn and re-recording things the way I wanted them to be. The next day, they walked in and said, 'Hey, that's great! When did you do that?' It was kind of a cheap thing to do, but I had to do something to get what I wanted."

"JUMP"

1984 (1984)

"WE RECORDED 'Jump' live in the studio with me playing keyboards, and then I put the guitar on later. I used an OBX-A keyboard, which they stopped making. I think we just recorded one take. Actually, the tape ran out at the very end, just in time. When Donn mixed it, he had to fade it just right; otherwise, he would have run out of tape.

"The guitar solo was punched in, I'll admit it. I'm not proud. You can hear that there are two distinct parts to that solo. I can't even remember what I played originally. All I remember is the recorded, pieced-together version that everybody knows."

"WHY CAN'T THIS BE LOVE"

5150 (1986)

"5150 WAS a very inspired record. The tunes are really fresh. There's a lot of soul there. 'Why Can't This Be Love' sounds so elaborate because of the instrumentation. I used the arpeggiator in the OB-8, so everyone had to play that. That's why it has kind of a uniform effect. The song is more pop-popular, but I don't see what's wrong with that. I would love to have written a Christmas carol.

"Sammy Hagar's work on this album is like nothing he'd ever done. I think people were afraid that Van Halen would start sounding like one of Sammy's solo albums. But I knew it wouldn't happen because I'd be writing the music, and my music doesn't sound like Sammy Hagar music."

"WHEN IT'S LOVE"

OU812 (1988)

"OU812 WAS a lot easier to make. That's not to say that *5150* was difficult, but Sammy and I were just feeling each other out. We were more comfortable and relaxed. We opened the doors and it all came out. It's more mature, too. When we recorded 'When It's Love,' I was so focused."

"POUNDCAKE"

FOR UNLAWFUL CARNAL KNOWLEDGE (1991)

"WHEN I CAME up with 'Poundcake,' it didn't really excite anyone until Andy [*Johns, producer*] suggested I use some electric 12-strings to flesh out the rhythm tracks. It turned out to be just the thing the song needed. All of a sudden, the lyrics, the title and everything came into sharp focus. What you hear are two electric 12-strings doubled beneath my usual dirty guitar. It's an odd sound. It wasn't really planned.

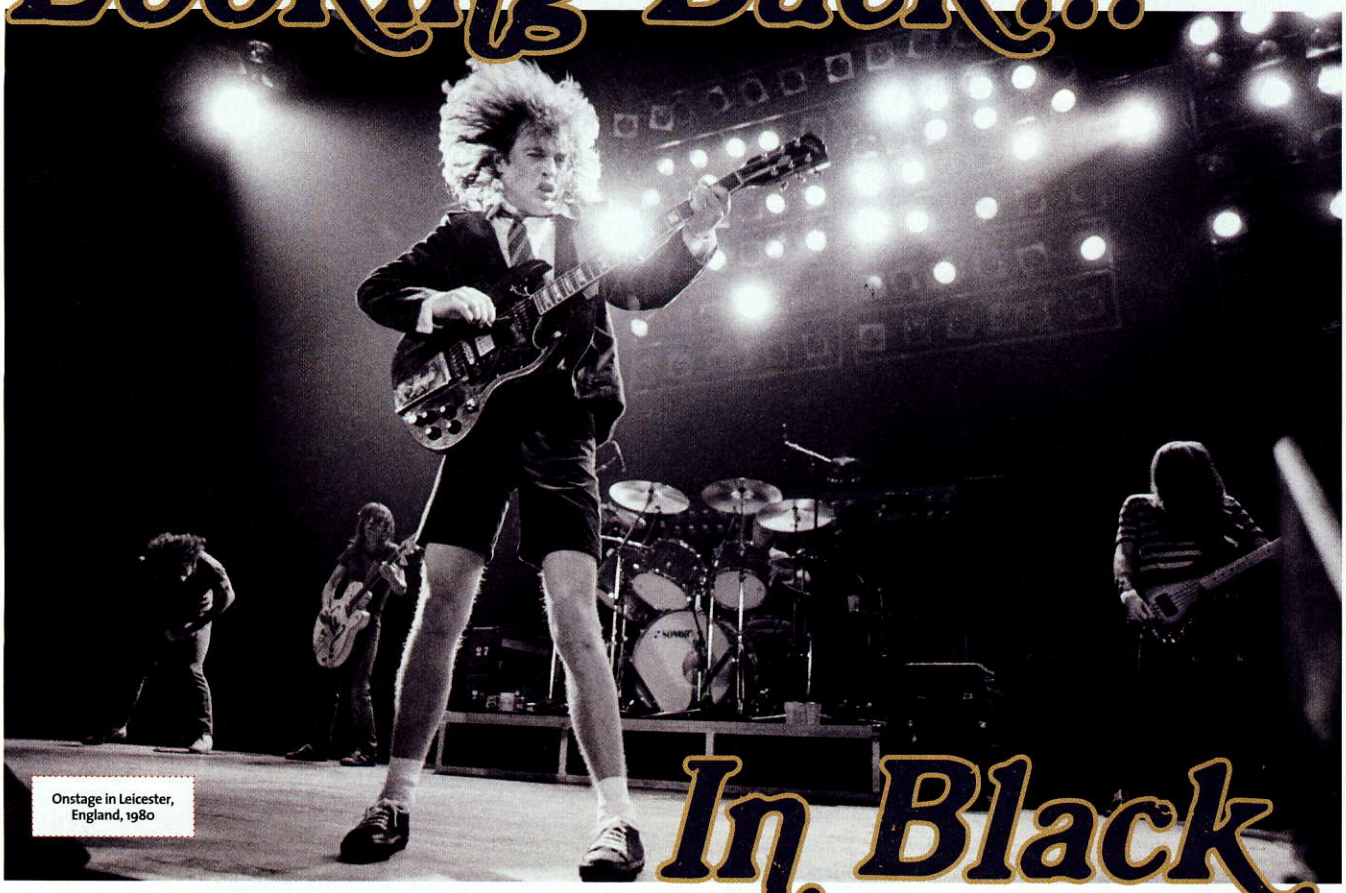
"The solo goes four bars, another four bars, then two bars. Al kept insisting that it wasn't finished. He likes to count, and I never do. I'm strictly feel. I'm always screwing around with time, because I never count."

"RIGHT NOW"

FOR UNLAWFUL CARNAL KNOWLEDGE

"THE ONLY REASON we gave Pepsi the music was because they were going to use the song anyway. They would have just recut it with studio musicians, like they do for some TV movies because they can't use the original. If they use the original recording, they've got to pay, but if they don't, all they do is give credit to the artist and then pay the studio cats. Pepsi told us they were going to do that, so we said, 'Hey wait a minute, we might as well get the money.' I ain't that proud, you know. I'm not going to say, 'No, go ahead, rip us off. And keep the money, too!'" *GL*

Looking Back... In Black



Onstage in Leicester, England, 1980

Angus Young expounds on a dirty dozen's worth of AC/DC classics.

ANGUS YOUNG MAY BE a small guy, but he plays the biggest, hardest lead guitar this side of Jimmy Page. In fact, there hasn't been a band since Led Zeppelin that has rocked as hard for as long as AC/DC. They have consistently delivered the goods through a score of albums, all of which showcase their penchant for raw, straight-up, blues-based hard rock.

For over three decades, Angus and brother Malcolm have comprised one of the most ferocious guitar tandems in rock, with Malcolm holding up the rhythm end of the business on his beat-up 1963 Gretsch Firebird and complementing his younger sibling's lean, hook-laden lead excursions constructed on his prized 1964 SG. "I started playing SGs because of a book, really," says Angus. "An American buddy of mine had a big Gibson jazz guitar and he had an old catalog, and I looked through it. I always focused on the SG. It's got the same neck, really, as a Les Paul, and if you're a little guy, it's easier to play, because you've got all that excess trimmed off it."

Guitar Legends caught up with Australia's greatest import in New York's posh Four Seasons hotel during the American leg of the band's most recent world tour. Clad in denim jacket and pants, purple socks and sneakers, Angus Young was the very essence of rock and roll, smoking a dozen-plus cigarettes in an hour and laughing easily as he reminisced about the origins of some of AC/DC's most memorable moments.

"THE JACK"

HIGH VOLTAGE (1976)

"THE ORIGINS OF that are from *West Side Story*. We were fiddling about, and Bon [*Scott, vocals*] was taking the words

from the song, 'Maria,' and singing 'Gonorrhea.' And then we were in the clubs playing a slow blues and Bon put together some lyrics. It's a good song. Another, simple blues thing in E. A lot of our songs are in E and A, and a couple in D. We might stray into a C. The key of A is a great key for Brian [*Johnson*] to sing in. You see some bands and they're playing songs in some odd key and the poor stiff singer has to sing something in C sharp minor. It then becomes opera. I've heard 'The Jack' sung in Russia, in France, all over. You play it and they sing it, and they get it right. It's surprising."

"DIRTY DEEDS DONE DIRT CHEAP"

DIRTY DEEDS DONE DIRT CHEAP (1976)

"THAT'S ANOTHER ONE you can pick up on and sing along with.

It comes from a cartoon character, and this was his calling card. He would pull it out: 'Dirty Deeds, Done Dirt Cheap.' We thought it was a good idea for a song. In Australia, *TNT* [*1975*] was a big album and song for us. It came out and we thought it had some real good songs. And then the thought was, How can we get better than this?"

MICHAEL PUTLAND / RETNA LTD

"PROBLEM CHILD"

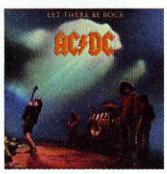
DIRTY DEEDS DONE DIRT CHEAP

"MAL KICKED THAT OFF. He had the chords and it was very tough sounding. We were messing around and, once again, it's the same thing—you take something and you just keep playing it until you go, 'Whoa, that's happening; that's good.' And then Bon had the lyric line, the 'problem child,' and he kept saying it was about me. Bon thought I was a bit of a juvenile delinquent. I think that's how I was. I'm a bit wild and woolly, up front and direct, so that's why he thought, Well, Angus is tough—you can't shove him around. I always laughed when he said that."

"LET THERE BE ROCK"

LET THERE BE ROCK (1977)

"THE ALBUM WAS *Let There Be Rock*, and when we went to write



the tracks, my older brother George was producing it and he said to me and Malcolm, 'What would you really like to do with this album?' And we said, 'Well, you know, we want more of the guitar thing up front.' So he says, 'Okay, let's do a guitar thing,' and out of it came the title track. It was just one of those songs, where you put a little story in it, and it's a simple song, but it's got a groove. What it was between me and Mal was that we would say, 'Let's blow away and do a jam,' and then you'd get the chord structure. Then we'd sit down with George and trim it until it sounded like it was just the raw edge, and then we would work to get it to rock and sound natural. You'd listen to the track, and say, 'Get rid of some of that.' You can write songs that have bits going this way and bits going that way, but you've got to get it to swing and sound like a band and not a bunch of guys coming in to do a slick session job."

"WHOLE LOTTA ROSIE"

LET THERE BE ROCK

"THAT WAS BON'S idea. We were playing a gig in Tasmania and, after the show, we were wandering the streets. Bon went out on his own and when he came back he said this big woman grabbed him and that her and her friend were telling him how many famous people she'd had. She said she'd had 28 famous people *that month*! And then she dragged him off to bed. After the act she thought Bon was asleep—but he was just pretending to be asleep, because he said he was sort of pinned against the wall—and she leaned over to her friend and said, "29." He had the idea for the song 'cause she was such a big girl."

"HIGHWAY TO HELL"

HIGHWAY TO HELL (1979)

"THAT CAME FROM touring, really. We'd been on a long, long tour and

it was like the actual name of the song came before the song. Malcolm was on the drum kit, I was on the guitar, and I just played the riff and Mal said, 'Okay, let's do this.' It started with this basic guitar riff and we had sort of the verse and chorus with the guitar, and it was only a matter of going from the verse to the chorus. Everything you went into you sort of said, 'Well, that's obvious, that's obvious,' and it was a case of fishing. And then when we got to the studio, I just fucking did an E chord and it worked."

"BACK IN BLACK"

BACK IN BLACK (1980)

"WELL, THAT WAS one of Mal's riffs, and one that he had around

for quite a while. We were on tour, and he came in and said to me, 'I've got this riff and I keep playing it all the time.' That's when I first heard the riff, and I thought it was great. And so he kept it 'cause he was going to ditch it. He had a habit of that, he would play something, and say, 'No, no, that's gone.' He thought it sounded a bit heavy. We didn't want to be in the Led Zeppelin kind of thing. Our thing, to us, was always the rhythm end, the swing, the groove thing. Up to then, the heaviest thing we'd done, to us anyhow, was 'Sin City,' because the riff sounded a little bit metally. The two of us came up with the chorus riff. I get a lot of ideas from toilets. I'd just go and sit, smoke a cigarette and contemplate. Sometimes you can have something, a tune or something, for years and you get so far with it, and then you can't put it together and then years later you come back to it, and it falls together. 'High Voltage' was like that. Malcolm always used to say, I want a track with the chords A-C-D-C in it. So that's what we did."

"YOU SHOOK ME ALL NIGHT LONG"

BACK IN BLACK

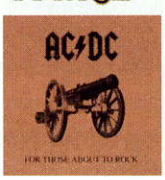
"WE HAD A COUPLE of riffs and Malcolm had the chorus idea for 'You Shook Me,' but he thought it was a bit corny. When we were first playing it, we didn't even really have the beat, and when we got into the studio we fiddled around, doing different things to see which one was right. And we eventually came back to the one we had started with. Even [*producer*] Mutt Lange was saying, 'Oh, we need to try that again.' A few days later, he went, 'Go back to what you were doing.' We go through everything. I don't think we've ever taken a song and said, 'Oh, that's it. There's nothing to change.' We try to find things that are not blatantly obvious."

"HELLS BELLS"

BACK IN BLACK

"I'D BEEN AT HOME and put the opening riff on a cassette with an acoustic. I was playing it in E, and then when we got to the studio, we changed it to A for the vocal thing. It was just one of those riffs—it was simple yet spooky. It's not minor but it sounds minorish. We're not famous for minor chords. In fact, Mal says, 'We played all those fucking songs, and no minor chords. We always avoided it because it's common in songs when people want to get something sweet, all these strange chords come into it. Some keys are very sweet, and you try to avoid them. Or some keys sound 'country'—if you play a open G chord, it sounds like country honk. It's got that *rururururur* in it. It's the same for guitars. You've got choruses, like 'You Shook Me' is G—but you try to keep it without it going *rururururur*, into country. It's like if you play a song in F sharp, it sounds meaner in some respects—meaner and a bit jazzy. As for the bells, sometimes things just come to you. That's a real church bell in England. English church is kind of weird at the moment, with women vicars and all sorts of things, so I think some of them don't even believe in what they're doing. I suppose there's religion and there's fanaticism."

"FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK"



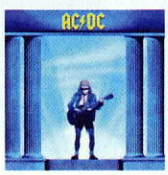
FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK (1981)

"THAT TOO is a bit of a guitar tinkling thing, and the guitar is on the offbeat. Someone once told me, 'Oh, that's very clever, you're playing four-four time and your going three-four time.' And I go, 'It's not fucking conscious!' It was a weird thing, because we had been here on tour, and it was Brian's first tour of America. We had done *Back in Black*, but even with that album, we were just sort of touring and playing the tracks and we just thought, Oh, it's another tour. It wasn't until later—I think with me it was about a year later—I was in a pub with one of our tour managers and he was telling his mate how much it had sold. I stopped him and said, 'Quit bullshiting.' But it turned out he was right. So it was kind of weird, you know. And then you come here, and there was such a big fuss about it. At times, you thought, Wait a minute! because we were aware of the tendency to overkill—they make a fuss about something and then they want to shoot it in the foot."

"WHO MADE WHO"

WHO MADE WHO (1986)

"THAT CAME FROM when we were doing the soundtrack for



Stephen King's *Maximum Overdrive* movie. We had these ideas and originally he wanted to just use a couple of tracks from different albums. But then he said it would be great if he had a title track and he wanted something around the name *Maximum Overdrive*. He must have been buying some guitar gadgets. And we said, 'Nooo, no.' So Malcolm had a few ideas, one was 'Who Made Who,' and it was a case where we sat down and bashed away and put it together. The movie was about trucks, so Mal, on the demo, was playing the rhythm like it was truck horns. We thought it was clever.

"Stephen King is an AC/DC fan... we didn't even have to pay him! We met at that time, he was telling us what a big fan he was. That's why we did it, really, you know. We had been offered things and you know how they go through trends with putting different music in movies, and it was only because he asked that we did it. When you're working with someone who's there because they want to do it, it's different from someone saying, 'I'm going to pay you a lot of money. Write me a top-ten hit.' The song did great, but the movie didn't." *GL*

Classic Rock Rules!

The stories behind rock's most famous songs.

GUITAR LEGENDS #109

JUST HOW DID DUANE ALLMAN come to join Eric Clapton to record the Derek and the Dominos album *Layla*? Why did Lynyrd Skynyrd choose to attack Neil Young in "Sweet Home Alabama"? Who really wrote "Hotel California"?

The history of classic rock is filled with unusual anecdotes, odd coincidences and bizarre twists, not to mention some musical miracles. Through the years, the greatest rock guitarists have regaled *Guitar World*'s readers with their recollections of just how those brilliant solos came to be played and how those monster hits came to be written. These inside accounts are far more than fascinating anecdotes. On the one hand, they often reveal much about the guitarist's creative process and the way he interacts with his fellow band members or accompanying musicians. They also open a window into the complicated world of the studio. Finally, the guitarist's reminiscences can be pretty hot stuff, as they often contradict accepted history.

Below, *Guitar Legends* reprises some of the best of those spontaneous, fascinating trips down classic rock memory lane.

DICKEY BETTS (ALLMAN BROTHERS)

"JESSICA"

***BROTHERS AND SISTERS* (1973)**

"I KNEW WHAT I wanted to do, but I couldn't quite find it. Then my little daughter, Jessica, crawled into the room, and I just started playing to her, trying to capture the feeling of her crawlin' and smilin'. That's why I called it 'Jessica.' "

"RAMBLIN' MAN"

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

"I WROTE 'RAMBLIN' MAN' in

[*bassist*] Berry Oakley's kitchen at about four in the morning. Everyone had gone to bed, but I was sitting up. Once I got started, I probably wrote that song in about 20 minutes, but I'd been thinking about it for over a year or two. And it just happened like *that* [*snaps fingers*]!"

KEITH RICHARDS (THE ROLLING STONES)

"STREET FIGHTING MAN"

***BEGGAR'S BANQUET* (1968)**

"THERE'S NO ELECTRIC guitars on there at all. Only the bass, which I overdubbed afterward, is electric. I played an acoustic guitar and overloaded it into a really early Phillips Norelco cassette recorder, which I used as a pickup. I miked into it, then played it back in the studio with a microphone through an extension speaker and put it on the tape that way. It's picked up, but you still have the dryness and feel of an acoustic guitar. You've got the best of both worlds."

"(I CAN'T GET NO) SATISFACTION"

***OUT OF OUR HEADS* (1965)**

"I DIDN'T LIKE IT; I thought the fuzz tone was a gimmick. But we were short one song for the album, so I said, 'Well, I've got this one.' It was my blind spot. Hey, you can't deny it was a great rock and roll record, but at the time I didn't think it was a single. It wasn't the way I wrote it. It's like a Mickey Mouse version to me."

ROBBY KRIEGER (THE DOORS)

"LIGHT MY FIRE"

***THE DOORS* (1967)**

"THAT WAS THE FIRST song I ever wrote. I had no thoughts of writing songs, because Jim [*Morrison, Doors singer*] was the composer. Then one day he said, 'Hey, we don't have enough songs. You guys try writing some.' I thought, Well, okay.

"What really amazed me was you'd think that a guy of Jim's caliber would have only wanted to do his own stuff. Can you imagine going up to Bob Dylan and saying, 'Hey, Bob, I wrote this tune for you?' That shows you something about Jim. He wanted it to be 'the Doors,' not 'Jim Morrison and the Doors' He was adamant about that."

"THE END"

THE DOORS

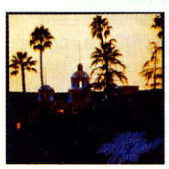
"THAT STARTED OUT as just a cute little love song: 'This is the end, my friend, my beautiful friend.' And I got the idea to do an Indian tuning, because I was into Ravi Shankar in a big way. I ended up using a drop-D, and from there it started getting longer and more weird. And every time we'd play it, Jim would add more weird stuff to it."

JOE WALSH (THE EAGLES)

"HOTEL CALIFORNIA"

***HOTEL CALIFORNIA* (1976)**

"THAT TUNE WAS WRITTEN by Don Felder, regardless of what [*Glenn*] Frey and [*Don*] Henley say. He brought that tune in with no lyrics—Henley, Frey and J.D. Souther got together late at night for a month to put those together—but the song's signature descending chord progression was all Felder's. I thought up the lead parts, and was 75–80 percent responsible for their arrangement. But if Felder hadn't been there kicking me in the butt, I would not have played like that. He is a serious guitar player, and he's completely underestimated and undervalued."



DAVID GILMOUR (PINK FLOYD)

"MONEY"

***DARK SIDE OF THE MOON* (1973)**

"IT'S ROGER'S RIFF. He came in with the verses and lyrics for 'Money' more or less completed. And we just made up middle sections, guitar solos and all that stuff. We also invented some new riffs—we created a 4/4 progression for the guitar solo and made the poor saxophone player play in 7/4. It was my idea to break down and become dry and empty for the second chorus of the solo.

"I really wanted to make a dramatic statement with each of the three solos. The first one is artificially double-tracked. And the third one is actually double-tracked. I think the first two solos were performed on a Fender Stratocaster, but the last one was done on a different guitar—a Lewis, which was made by some guy in Vancouver. It had a two-octave neck, which meant I could get up to notes that I couldn't play on a Strat. I imagine I used a Hiwatt, but I'm not too certain. I used Fender Twin Reverbs in the studio a lot, too. But I'm certain the effects consisted of a Fuzzface fuzz box and a Binson echo/delay."

(top): Keith Richards in 1968; (left) David Gilmour backstage at Earls Court, London, May 1973

GARY ROSSINGTON (LYNYRD SKYNYRD)

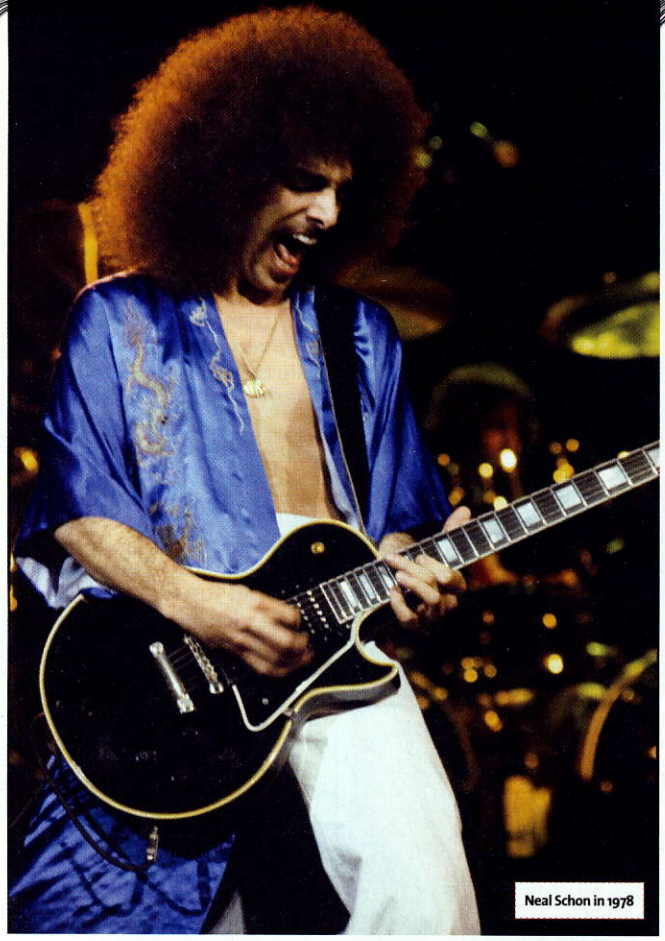
"FREE BIRD"

***PRONOUNCED LEH-NERD SKIN-NERD* (1973)**

"RONNIE [*VAN ZANT, Skynyrd vocalist*] didn't like it in the beginning. He complained that the opening chord progression was too complicated, and he couldn't find a melody for it. Every once in a while we'd bring it up again, and he'd just tell us to forget about it.

"Then one day we were at rehearsal and Allen [*Collins, guitar*] started playing the chord

SUS / CAMERA PRESS / RETNA (RICHARDS); JILL FURMANOVSKY / CAMERA PRESS / RETNA LTD. (GILMOUR)



Neal Schon in 1978

progression again, and Ronnie said, 'That's pretty.' Allen played it again, and Ronnie said, 'Okay, I got it.' And he wrote the lyrics in three or four minutes—the whole damned thing! He came up with a lot of stuff that way.

"So we started playing 'Free Bird' in clubs. Initially it was just a slow ballad. Then Ronnie said, 'Why don't you do something at the end of that so I can take a break for a few minutes?' So I came up with the ending chord progression and Allen played over them, then I soloed and then he soloed... It all evolved out of a jam one night. We started playing it that way, but Ronnie kept saying, 'It's not long enough. Make it longer.' We were playing three or four sets a night, and he was looking to fill them up."

"GIMME THREE STEPS"

PRONOUNCED LEH-NERD SKIN-NERD

"THE LYRICS TO 'Gimme Three Steps' are based on a true story. Ronnie went into a bar one night to look for someone. Allen and I were too young to get in so we waited outside. Suddenly, he came running out with a big ol' guy chasing him. It turned out that Ronnie had started dancing with this chick. Unfortunately, she had a redneck boyfriend who was drunk and had a gun—a nasty combination. Ronnie said, 'Just give me three steps and I'm gone. If you're going to shoot me, it's going to be in the ass or the in the elbow.' And he took off like a bat out of hell.

"We got in the car and split. He told us what happened and we laughed, and we kind of wrote the song right there."

NEAL SCHON (JOURNEY)

"WHEEL IN THE SKY"

***INFINITY* (1978)**

"WE WERE DRIVING through the middle of a desert one night—

nine of us in a station wagon. We pulled over to get some gas and to stretch, I grabbed my acoustic, sat on the hood of the car and started to play. That's how I wrote it!"

TED NUGENT

"CAT SCRATCH FEVER"

***CAT SCRATCH FEVER* (1977)**

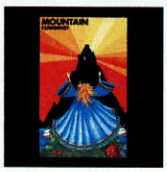
"That song came from a lick at soundcheck. My wife had come up with this antique medical journal that listed a disease called 'cat scratch fever.' My brain is like a computer; it catalogs everything. And when this guitar pattern came up, the words 'cat scratch fever' just fit perfectly."

LESLIE WEST (MOUNTAIN)

"MISSISSIPPI QUEEN"

***MOUNTAIN CLIMBING* (1970)**

" 'MISSISSIPPI QUEEN' took over where Clapton left off when he



quit Cream. To make up for my lack of speed I added in a lot of vibrato from the blues guys—like a chef adding ingredients to a stew—and worked on my squeals and pig grunts. [*laughs*] And the tone was fat, just like me. I used my Les Paul Junior and two Sunn stacks with the Coliseum PA heads. They were Hendrix's old amps, retolexed and re-coned. I turned both the mic volume and the master volume all the way up and overdrove the thing like crazy."

MIKE CAMPBELL (TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS)

"AMERICAN GIRL"

***TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS* (1976)**

"A LOT OF people think we're using electric 12-strings, but it's actually two six-strings playing different inversions of D major in unison.

"The song wasn't a conscious attempt to emulate Roger McGuinn, like some people think, but we were heavily influenced by the Byrds. We initially wrote several songs with that flavor, and when I started working with Tom we were both listening to the Byrds. But if anything, we tried to avoid that sound because we knew that we leaned in that direction naturally. It came as a complete surprise when Roger called us up and said he wanted to cut the song. We went over to his place and showed him how to play it. It was funny, because he said that when he heard 'American Girl' on the radio he thought he had written it and forgotten about it. We showed him the parts, and he ended up using a 12-string."

JIMMY PAGE (LED ZEPPELIN)

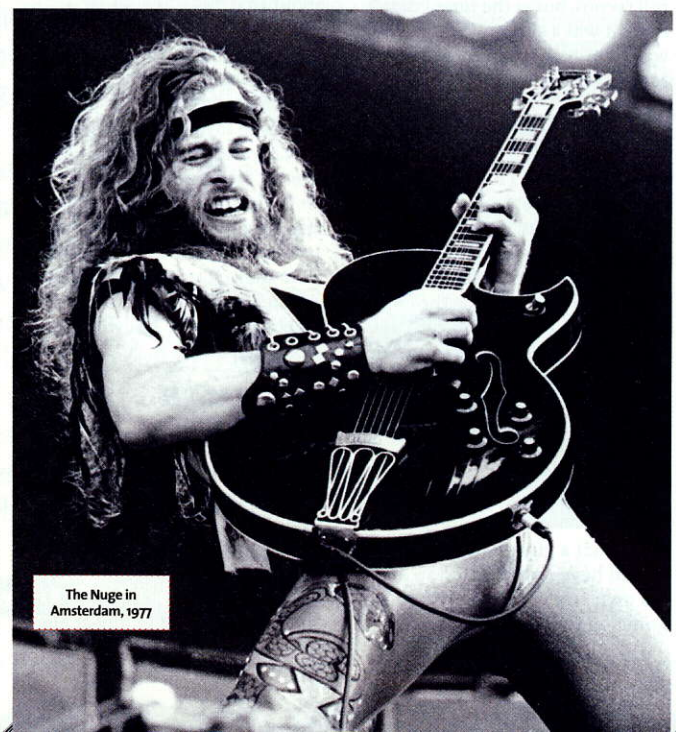
"STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN"

***LED ZEPPELIN IV* (1971)**

"I'D BEEN FOOLING around with an acoustic guitar and came up

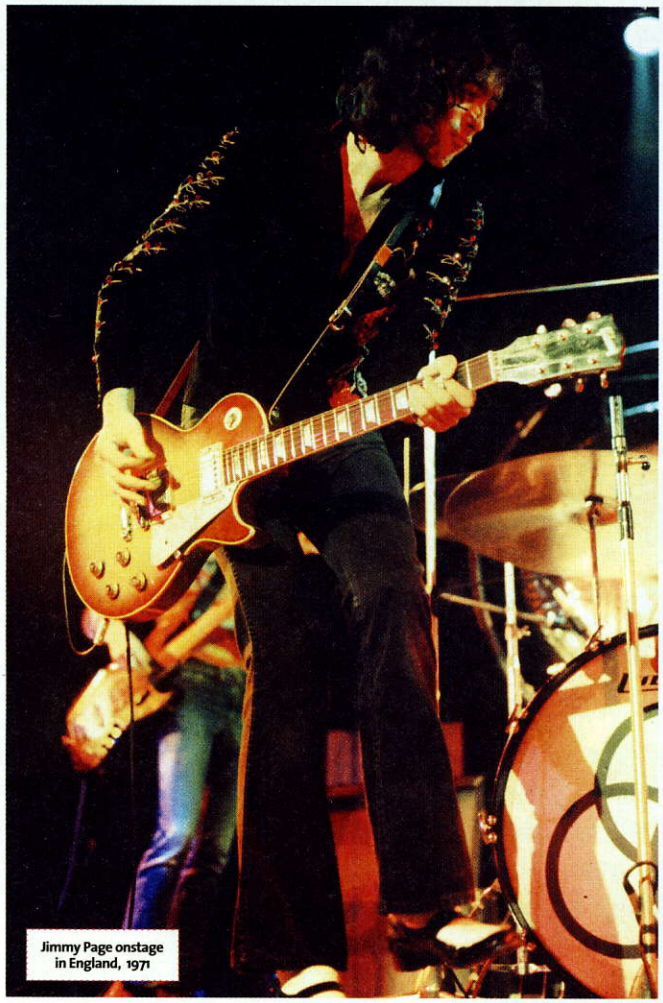
with several different sections, which I married together. I knew I wanted something that would have the drums come in at the middle and then build to a huge crescendo. Also, I knew I wanted the piece to speed up, which is against all musical...I mean, that's what a musician *doesn't* do.

"So I had all the structure, and



The Nuge in Amsterdam, 1977

RICHARD E. AARON / RETNA (SCHON); TOLCA / SUNSHINE / RETNAUX (NUGENT)



Jimmy Page onstage in England, 1971

I ran it by [*bassist*] John Paul Jones so he could get the idea of it—[*drummer*] John Bonham and Robert [*Plant, singer*] had gone out for the night—and then on the following day we got into it with John Bonham. You have to remember that at first there was a hell of a lot for everyone to remember on this one. But as we were sort of routining it, Robert started writing down these lyrics, and a huge percentage of them were written there and then.

"When it came time to record the solo I warmed up and did three of them. They were all quite different from each other, but the one we used was the best, I can tell you that!"

ROBIN TROWER
"BRIDGE OF SIGHS"

***BRIDGE OF SIGHS* (1974)**

"I HAD THE OPENING GUITAR riff for about six months before I could come up with the turnaround section. I loved that opening lick so much that I was determined to make the second half just as perfect. So I waited and waited... Then it came to me. The band played it for the first time at the Winterland in San Francisco, and we received like a 10-minute standing ovation. It obviously had magic."

> *"Twenty-three record companies turned down 'I Love Rock and Roll.'"*
> *—Joan Jett*

JOAN JETT
"I LOVE ROCK AND ROLL"

***I LOVE ROCK AND ROLL* (1981)**

"I CUT THE DEMO for 'I Love Rock and Roll' in England with Steve Jones and Paul Cook of the Sex Pistols. Twenty-three record companies turned it down; I have the letters. They all say, 'This is interesting, but we don't hear a hit.' "

Joan Jett, 1981

BRIAN MAY (QUEEN)
"WE WILL ROCK YOU"

***NEWS OF THE WORLD* (1978)**

"THAT WAS A RESPONSE to a particular phase in our career—when the audience was becoming a bigger part of the show than we were. They would sing all the songs. Sometimes, they'd be so vociferous that we'd have to stop the show and let them sing to us. So both Freddie and I thought it would be an interesting experiment to write songs with audience participation specifically in mind—everyone can stamp and clap and sing a simple motif. We recorded that in an old converted church with a good, natural sound. There are no drums on there. It's just us, stamping on boards, with many primitive delay machines, and clapping. A bit of singing, a bit of guitar playing and that's it.

"It's amazing to go to sports events and hear people do it. It's very gratifying to find that it has become part of folklore. I'll die happy because of that."

JIMI HENDRIX
"FOXY LADY"

***ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?* (1976)**

"I CAN'T WRITE happy songs. 'Foxy Lady' is about the only happy song I've written. And I didn't feel very happy when I started writing."

ERIC CLAPTON (DEREK AND THE DOMINOS)
"LAYLA"

***LAYLA (& OTHER ASSORTED LOVE SONGS)* (1970)**

"THE ALBUM WAS the culmination of about a year of hippie living. We lived in my house in England, playing non-stop, 24 hours a day. We were on a lot of dope and taking a lot of different things, but we were just playing all the time, just writing and riffing. When we went into the studio we didn't actually have too many concrete songs, but there was so much stored up that it just came together.

"Duane [*Allman*] hadn't even been talked about at that point; that was very coincidental. We were in the studio in Miami and heard that the Allmans were playing nearby. We went to see them and they came back to the studio, and we played them some stuff and jammed together. Duane and me hit it off right away—instant soul mates—and I asked him if he'd like to come back to the studio and play and help me out with the record. Of course, he agreed."

RITCHIE BLACKMORE (DEEP PURPLE)
"SMOKE ON THE WATER"

***MACHINE HEAD* (1972)**

"SIMPLICITY IS THE key to this song's endurance. And it is simple—you can still hear people playing it at music stores. I never had the courage to write until I heard [*the Who's*] 'I Can't Explain' and 'My Generation.' Those riffs were so straightforward that I thought, All right, if Pete Townshend can get away with that, then I can, too!"

BILLY GIBBONS (ZZ TOP)
"LA GRANGE"

***TRES HOMBRES* (1973)**

"HARMONIC CITY. The solo on 'La Grange' is one of my best. I like savage sounds, but my obscenity comes in harmonics rather than a grind for tone." *GL*

MICHAEL PUTLAND / RETNA LTD (PAGE); PETER MAZEL / SUNSHINE / RETNA LTD. (JETT)

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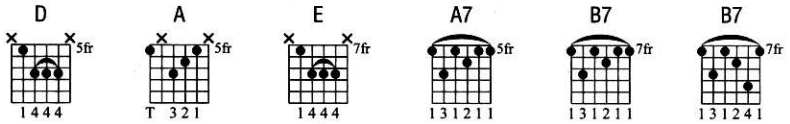
"COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN" LED ZEPPELIN

As heard on **LED ZEPPELIN** (ATLANTIC)

Words and Music by **Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones and John Bonham** ✶ *Transcribed by* **Andy Aledort**



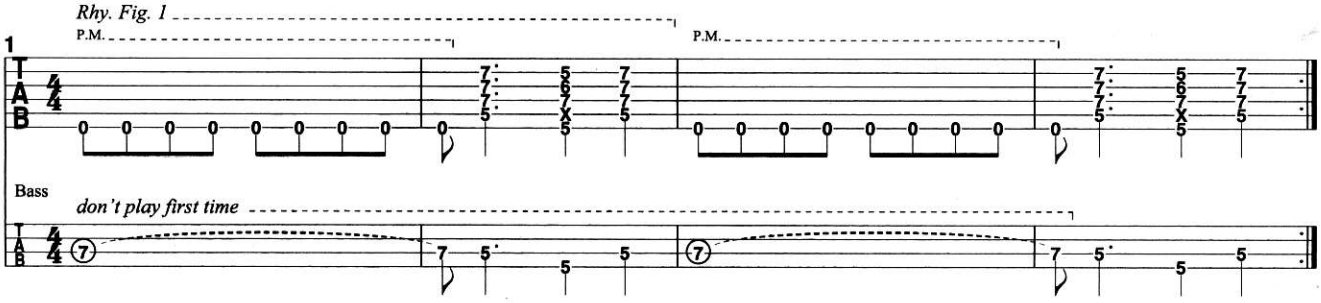
A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately Fast ♩ = 176

N.C.(E) D *A D N.C.(E) D A D

Gtr. 1 (w/light dist.)

Rhy. Fig. 1

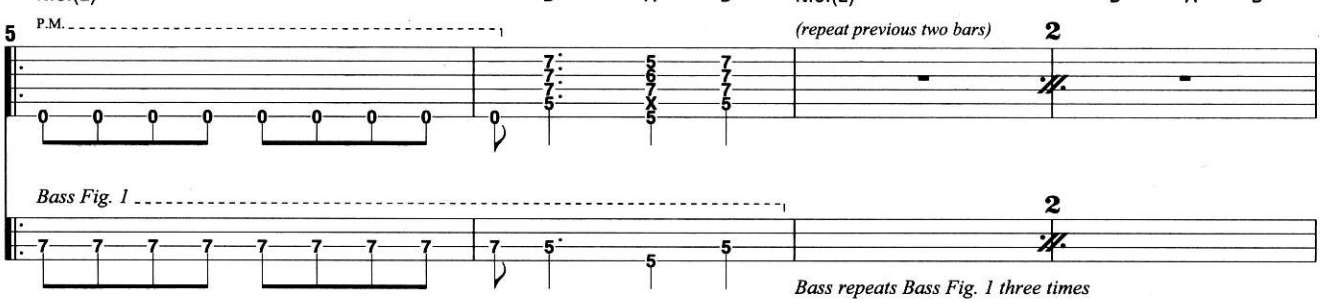


**fret ⑥ w/thumb every time this chord is played.*

B **1st Verse** (0:10)

Hey I don't know what it girl is that I like about stop you what you're doin' but I like it a lot Won't

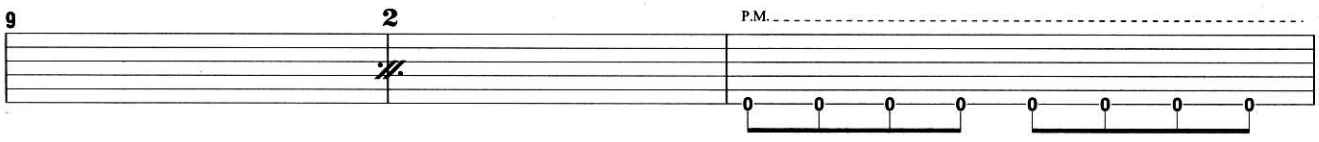
N.C.(E) D A D N.C.(E) D A D



Bass repeats Bass Fig. 1 three times

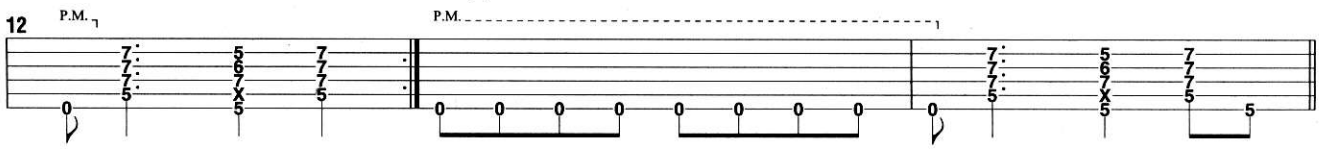
Hey you let me hold girl you you'll let me 1. drive me to ruin

N.C.(E) D A D N.C.(E)



2. feel your lovin' charms

D A D N.C.(E) D A D



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C **1st Chorus** (0:32)

Communication breakdown it's always the same

A7

Gtr. 1

Rhy. Fig. 2

15 P.M.

Gtr. 2 (w/light dist.)

Rhy. Fig. 2a

*upstroke strum

Bass

Having a nervous breakdown drive me insane

B(7)

19

end Rhy. Fig. 2

end Rhy. Fig. 2a

N.C.(E) D A D N.C.(E) D A D

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 1)

Bass

23

D **2nd Verse** (0:49)

Hey girl I got something I think you outta know

N.C.(E) D A D N.C.(E) D A D

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 eight times (see bar 1)

Gtr. 2

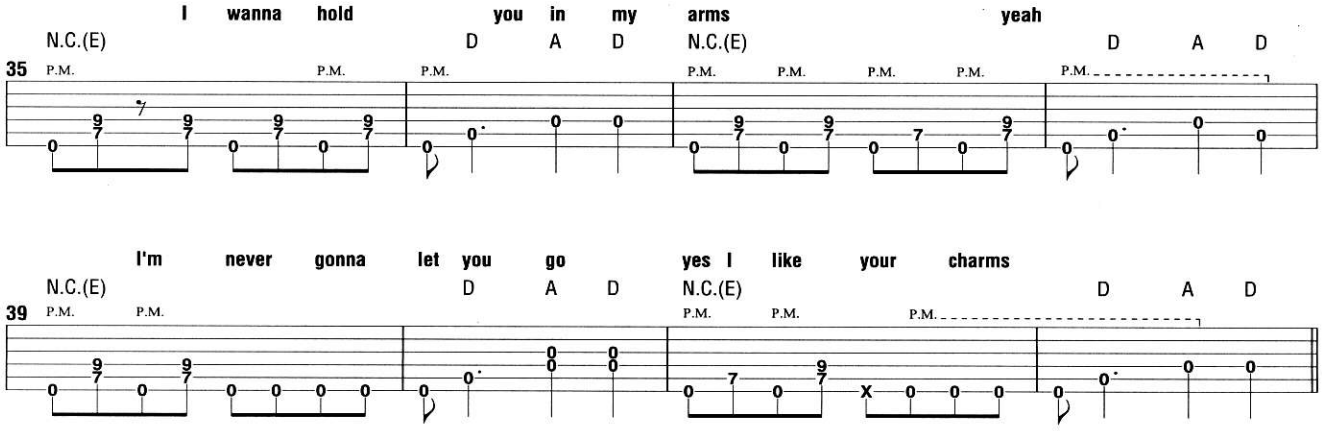
27 P.M.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 eight times (see bar 5)

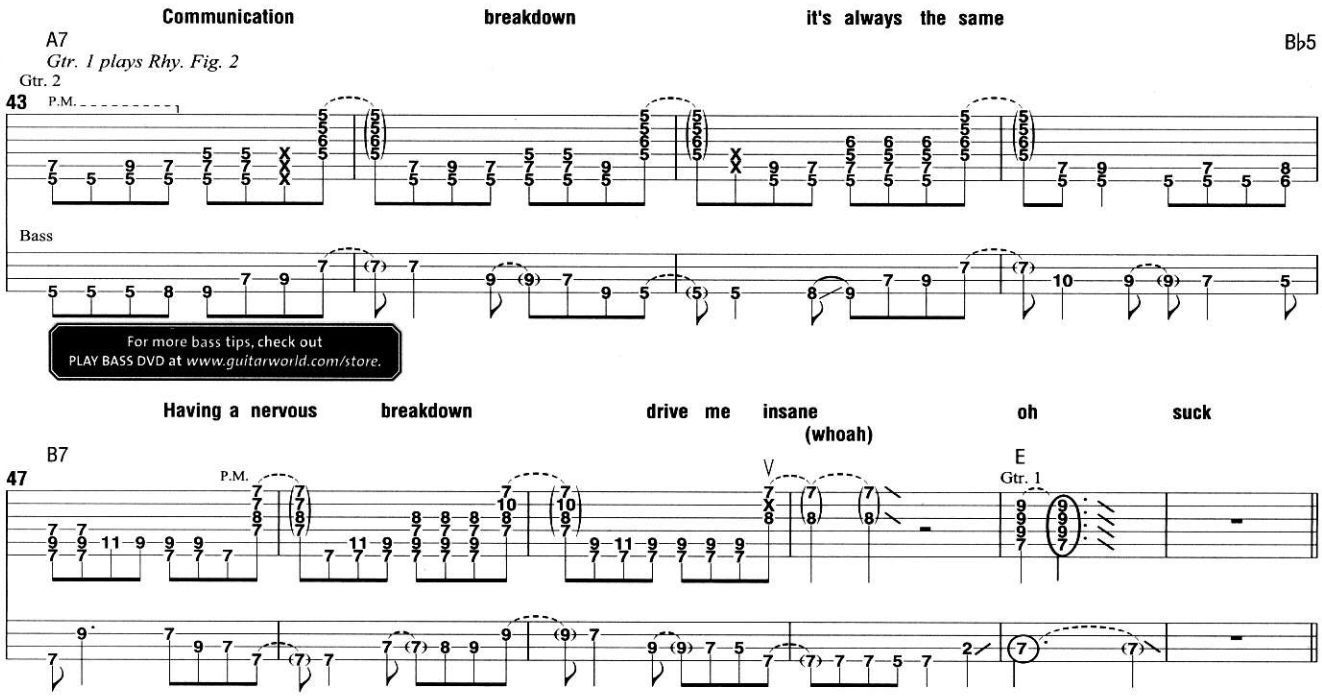
Hey babe I wanna tell you that I love you so

N.C.(E) D A D N.C.(E) D A D

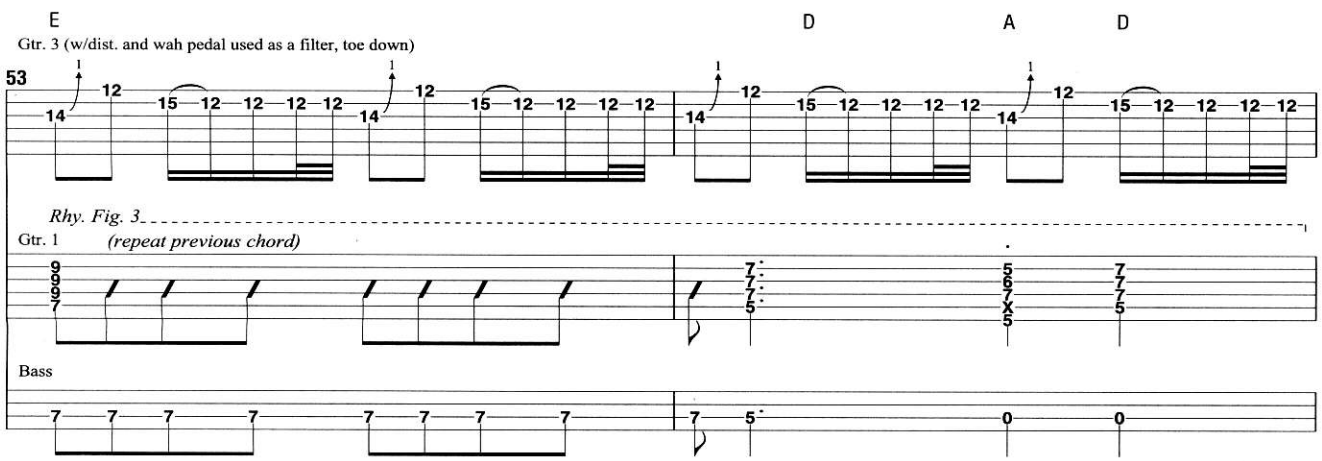
31 P.M.

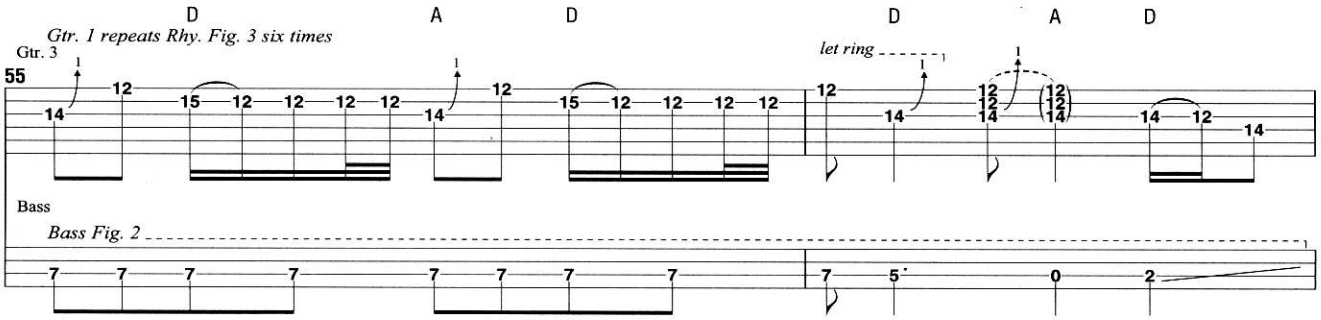


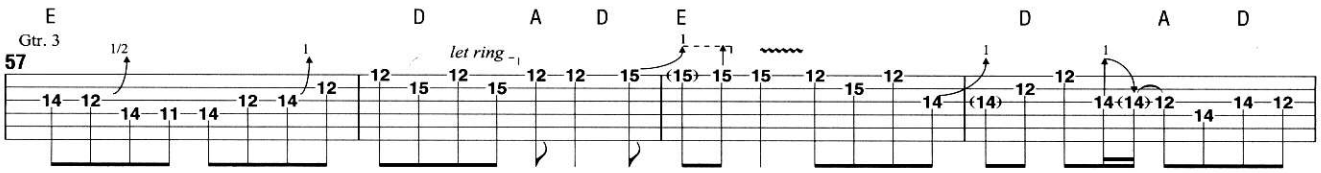
E **2nd Chorus** (1:11)

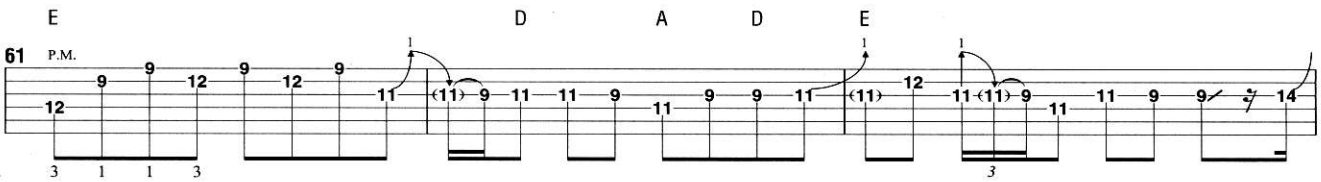


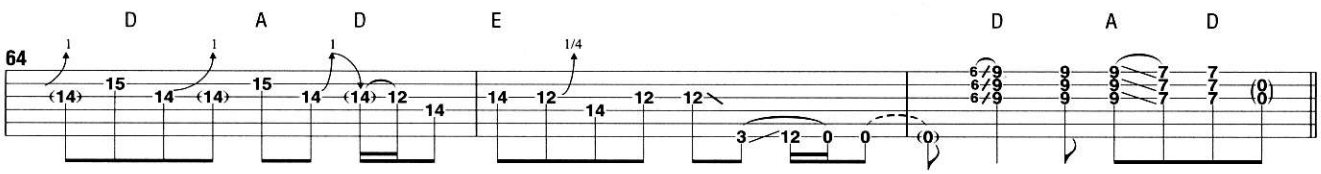
F **Guitar Solo** (1:25)









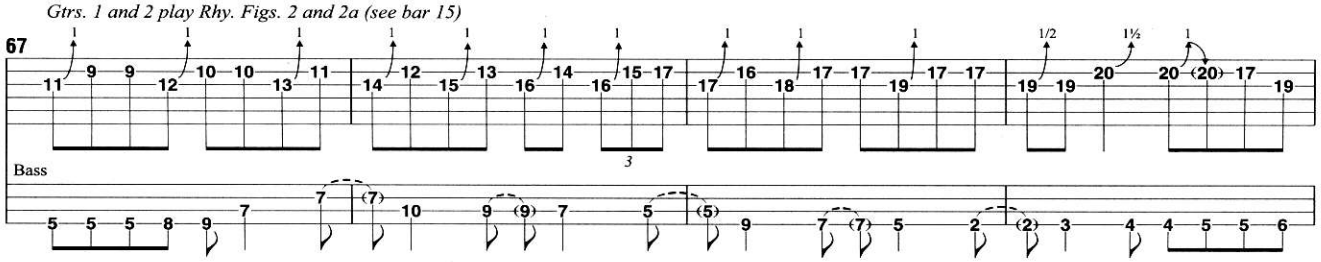


G **3rd Chorus** (1:44)

Communication breakdown It's always the same

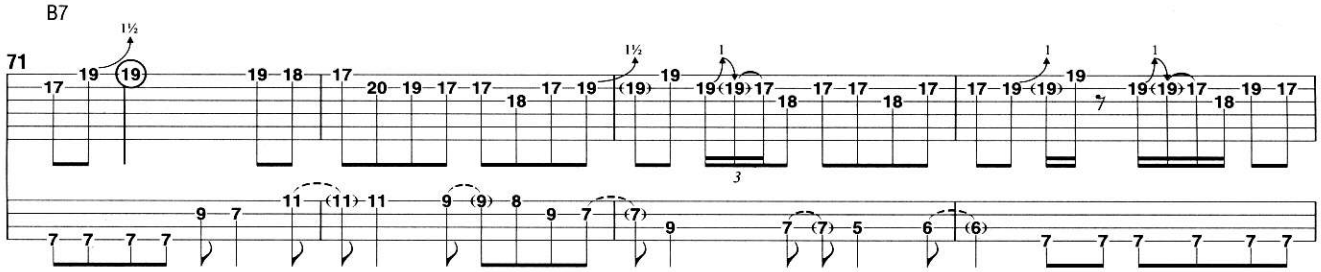
A7

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Figs. 2 and 2a (see bar 15)



I'm having a nervous breakdown Drive me insane

B7



N.C.(E) D A D N.C.(E) D A D

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 1)

75

**w/high-pitched microphonic guitar feedback*

H **Outro** (2:00)

Communication breakdown (I want you to love me all night) (I want

N.C.(E) D A D E5 D5 A D5

Gtr. 1 repeats previous two bars until fade

Gtr. 1 P.M.

Gtr. 2

79

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 twice (see bar 55)

Communication breakdown

you to love me) (Whoa) (ah a)

N.C.(E) D5 A D5 E5 D5 A D5

83

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 5)

Communication breakdown

(Whoa oh) (I want you to love me) (I want you

N.C.(E) D5 A D5 N.C.(E) D5 A D5

87

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 twice (see bar 55)

Communication breakdown

to love)

E D A D E

91

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 5)

D A D E **Communication** **breakdown** D A D

grad. bend grad. release

94

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 until fade (see bar 55)

E D A D E **Communication** **breakdown** D A D

97

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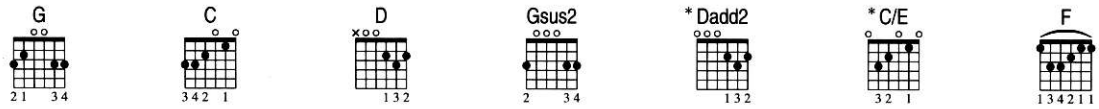
"MOTHER" PINK FLOYD

As heard on **THE WALL** (CAPITOL)

Words and Music by **Roger Waters** ✶ *Transcribed by* **Jeff Perrin** ✶ *Bass transcription by* **Matt Scharfglass**

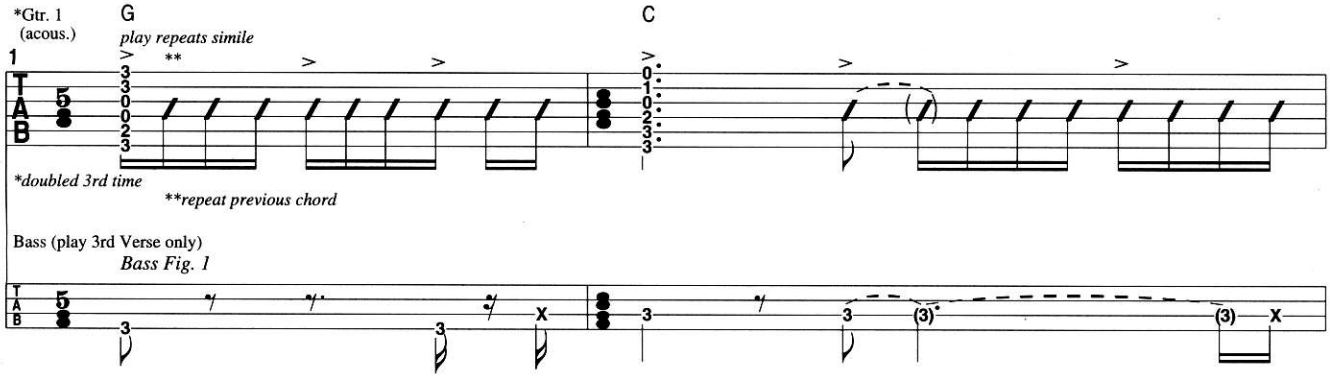


*Gtr. 2 only

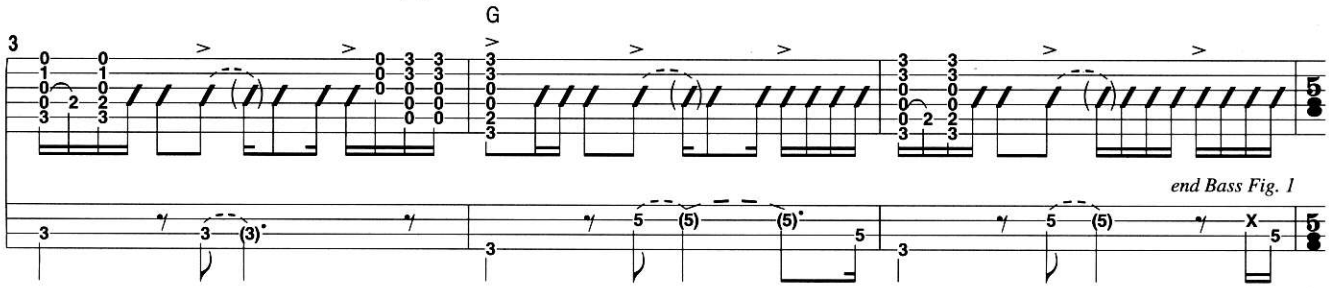
A Verses (0:00, 0:57, 3:21)

Slowly ♪ = 136

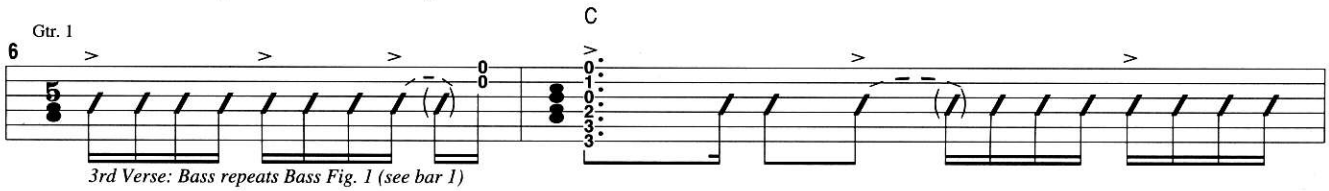
1. Mother do you think they'll drop the bomb
2. Mother should I run for president
3. Mother do you think she's good enough



(3.) for me

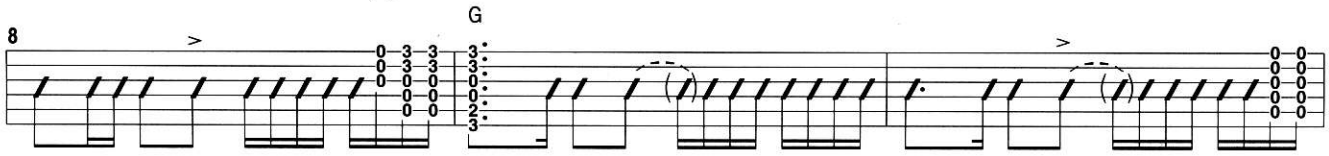


Mother do you think they'll like the song
Mother should I trust the government
Mother do you think she's dangerous



3rd Verse: Bass repeats Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 1)

(3.) to me



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Mother do you think they'll try to break my balls
Mother will they put me in the firing line
Mother will she tear your little boy apart

C G

11 Gtr. 1

Bass

For more bass tips, check out
PLAY BASS DVD at www.guitarworld.com/store.

Ooh ah Mother should I build a wall
Ooh ah is it just a waste of time
Ooh ah Mother will she break my heart

D C

13 *Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 1 on 2nd and 3rd Verses (see below)*

Substitute Bass Fill 1 on 2nd Verse (see below)

G Gsus2 G

16 *1st time, go back to* A *2nd Verse*
2nd and 3rd times, continue to B *Chorus*

Rhy. Fill 1 (1:41, 4:05)

Dadd2 C/E G

*Gtr. 2 (acous.)

**Gtr. 2 is in "high-strung" tuning. Strings ③, ④ and ⑤ are replaced by thinner strings tuned one octave higher than normal. String ⑥ is replaced by a high E string.*

Rhy. Fill 2 (2:33, 4:58)

Dadd2 C/E

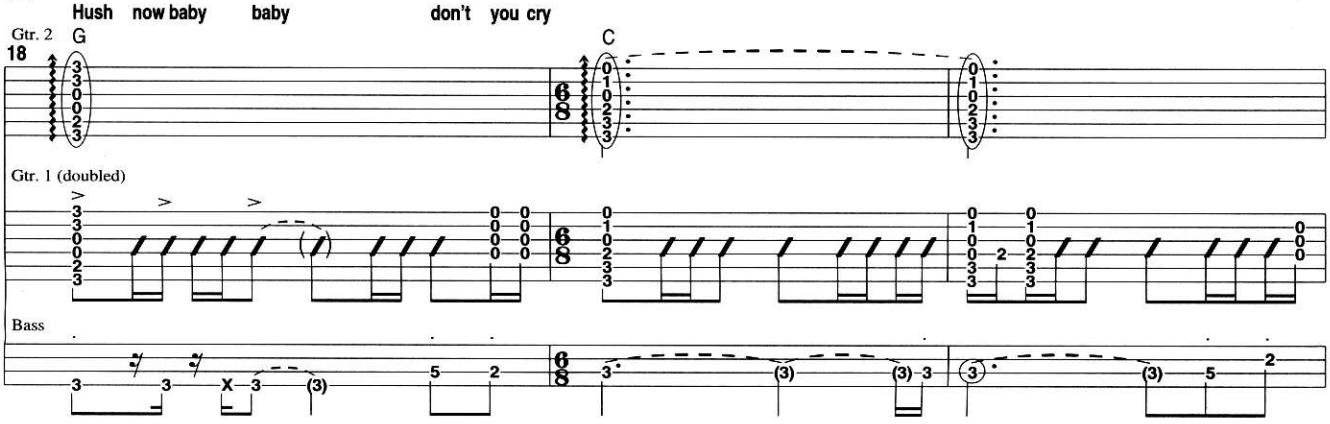
Gtr. 2 (acous.)

(play 3 times)

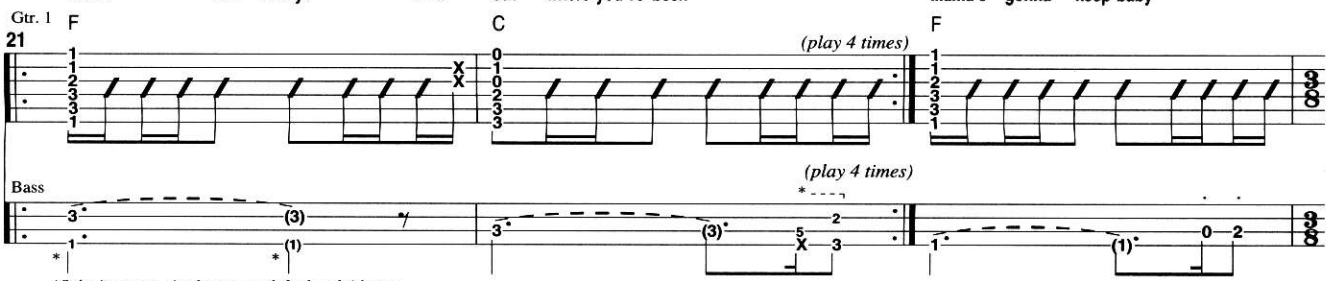
Bass Fill 1 (1:41)

D C G

B **Chorus** (1:54, 4:18)

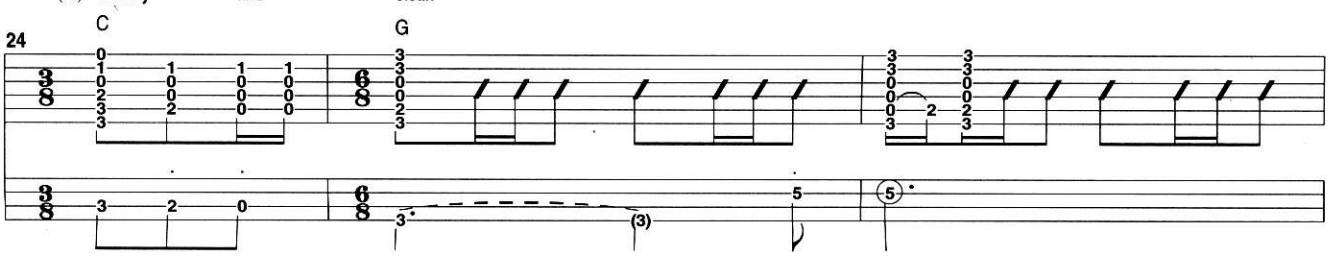
Hush now baby baby don't you cry

(1.) Mama's gonna make all of your nightmares come true
Mama's gonna put all of her fears into you
Mama's gonna keep you right here under her wing She
won't let you fly but she might let you sing Mama's gonna keep baby

(2.) Mama's gonna check out all your girlfriends for you
Mama won't let anyone dirty get through
Mama's gonna wait up until you get in
Mama will always find out where you've been Mama's gonna keep baby



*Substitute cue-sized notes each 2nd and 4th time.

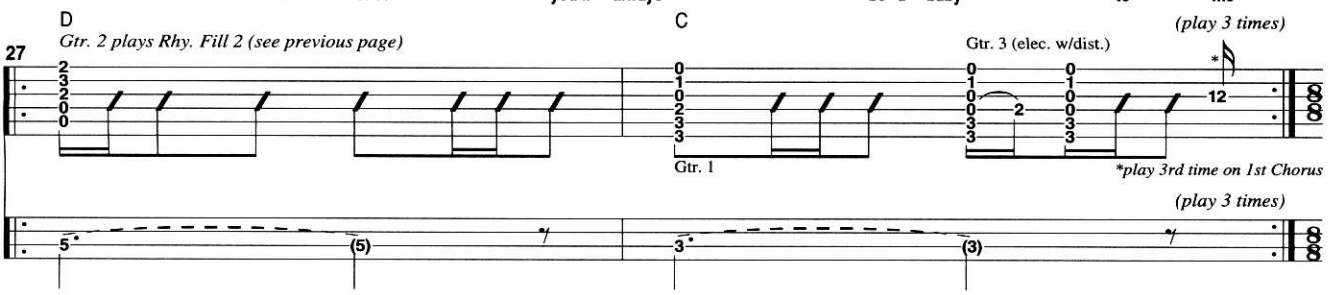
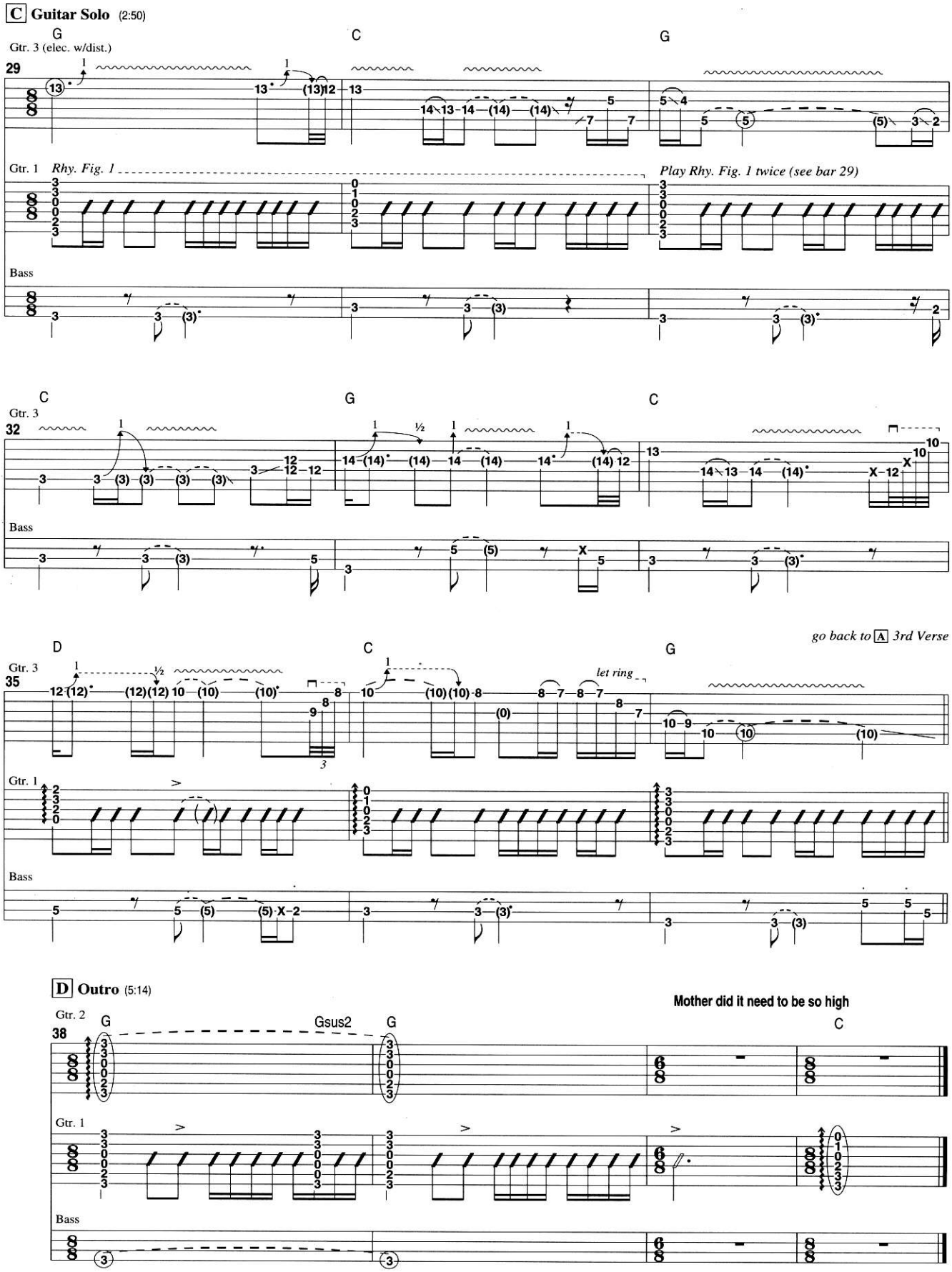
(1.) cozy and warm
(2.) healthy and clean



3rd time on 2nd Chorus, skip ahead to **D** Outro

(1.) Ooh babe
Ooh babe
Ooh babe of course Mama's gonna help build the wall

(2.) Ooh babe
Ooh babe
Ooh babe you'll always be a baby to me



C Guitar Solo (2:50)
G
C
G
Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)
29
Gtr. 1
Rhy. Fig. 1
Play Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 29)
Bass
C
G
C
Gtr. 3
32
Bass
go back to A 3rd Verse
D
C
G
Gtr. 3
35
let ring
Gtr. 1
Bass
D Outro (5:14)
Mother did it need to be so high
Gtr. 2
G
Gsus2
G
C
38
Gtr. 1
Bass

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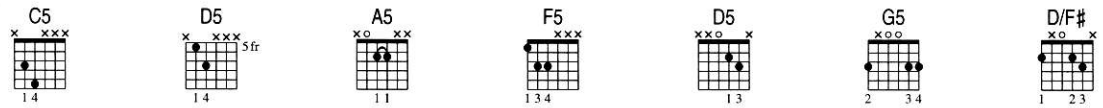
"WHOLE LOTTA ROSIE" AC/DC

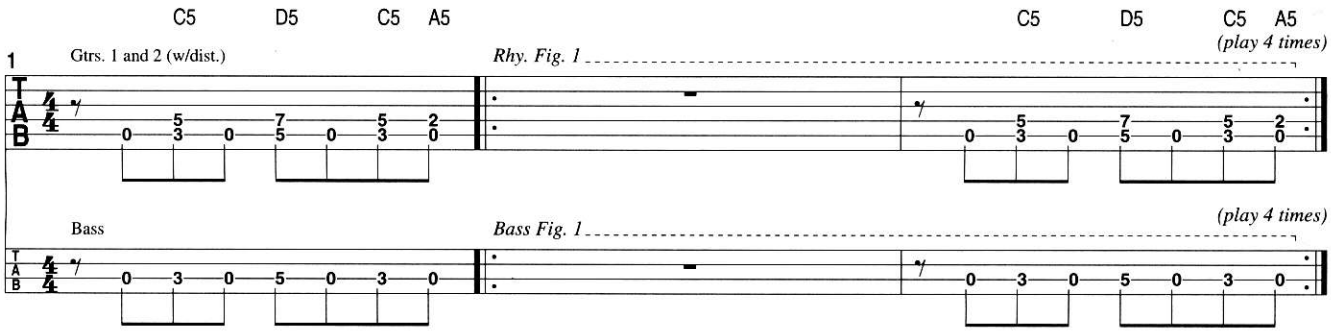
As heard on **LET THERE BE ROCK** (EPIC)
Words and Music by **Angus Young, Malcolm Young and Bon Scott** ★ *Transcribed by* **Jeff Perrin**

NOTE: Recording sounds slightly flat of concert pitch (approx. 25 cents).
To play along, tune strings slightly flat.



A Intro (0:00)

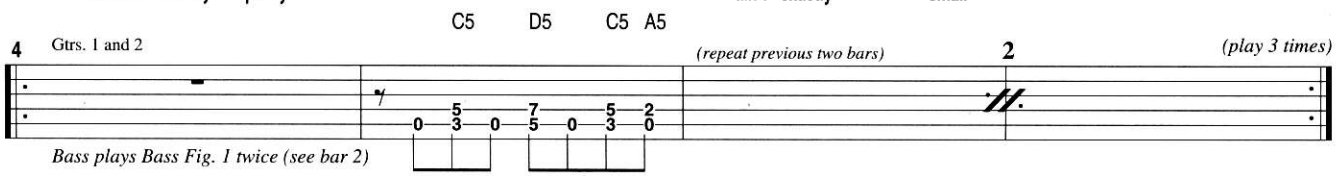
Moderately Fast ♩ = 160



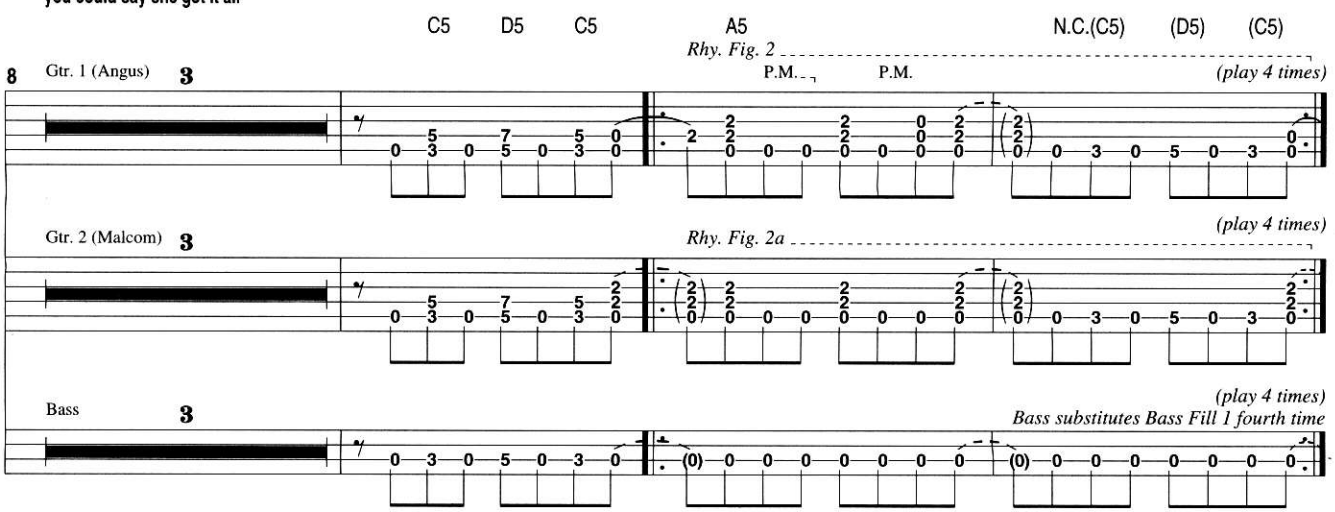
B 1st Verse (0:13)

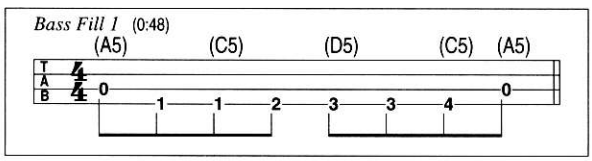
Wanna tell you a story
Ah come to lovin'
She ain't exactly pretty

'bout a woman I know
She steals the show
ain't exactly small



Forty-two thirty-nine fifty-six
you could say she got it all





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C **2nd and 3rd Verses** (0:49, 1:38)

2. Never had a woman never had a woman like you
Ain't no famous story ain't no skin and bones But you
(3.) honey you can do it do it to me all night long Only
All through the nighttime and right around the clock

A5 N.C.(C5) (D5) (C5) A5 N.C.(C5) (D5) (C5)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2a four times (see bar 12)

14 Gtr. 1 P.M. P.M. 2

Bass substitutes Bass Fig. 5 four times on 3rd verse (see bar 34)

Bass *Bass Fig. 2*

For more bass tips, check out
PLAY BASS DVD at www.guitarworld.com/store.

1.

Doin' all the things doin' all the things you do
give it all you got weighin' in at nineteen stones
wanna turn only wanna turn me on
Whew two muscled thighs don't

A5 N.C.(C5) (D5) (C5) A5

18 Gtr. 1 P.M. P.M. 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 twice (see bar 16)

2.

they never stop You're a whole lot of woman

A5 F5

D **1st and 2nd Pre-chorus** (1:13, 2:02)

22 Gtrs. 1 and 2 *Rhy. Fig. 3* *Rhy. Fig. 4*

Bass substitutes Bass Fill 3 on third verse

Bass *Bass Fig. 3*

a whole lot of woman Whole lotta

D5

25 *end Rhy. Fig. 4*

end Bass Fig. 3

E **1st and 2nd Chorus** (1:19, 2:08)

Rosie Whole lotta Rosie and you're a whole lotta

A5 G5 A5 G5

Rhy. Fig. 5

28

Bass Fig. 4

2nd time, skip ahead to **F** *1st Guitar Solo* *go back to* **C** *3rd Verse*

woman 3. Oh

G5 D/F♯ G5 D/F♯ G5 A5 N.C.(E5) (D5) (C5)

Gtr. 1

Rhy. Fig. 6

32

P.M. P.M.

Gtr. 2

Rhy. Fig. 6a

Gtr. 2 substitutes Rhy. Fig. 2a on repeat (see bar 12)

Bass *end Bass Fig. 4* *Bass Fig. 5*

F **1st Guitar Solo** (2:21)

A5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Figs. 2 and 2a seven times (see bar 12)

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)

36

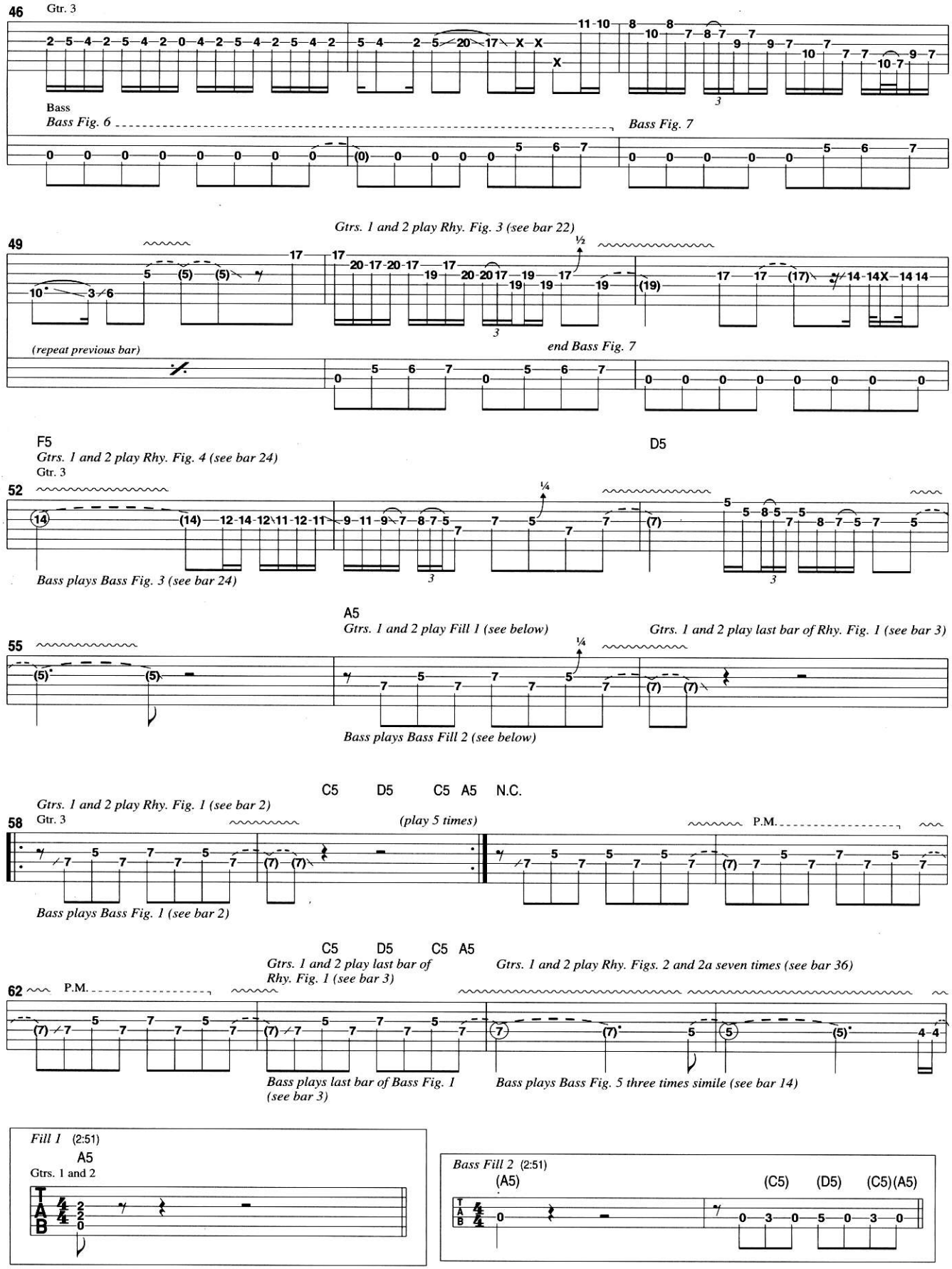
Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 three times simile (see bar 34)

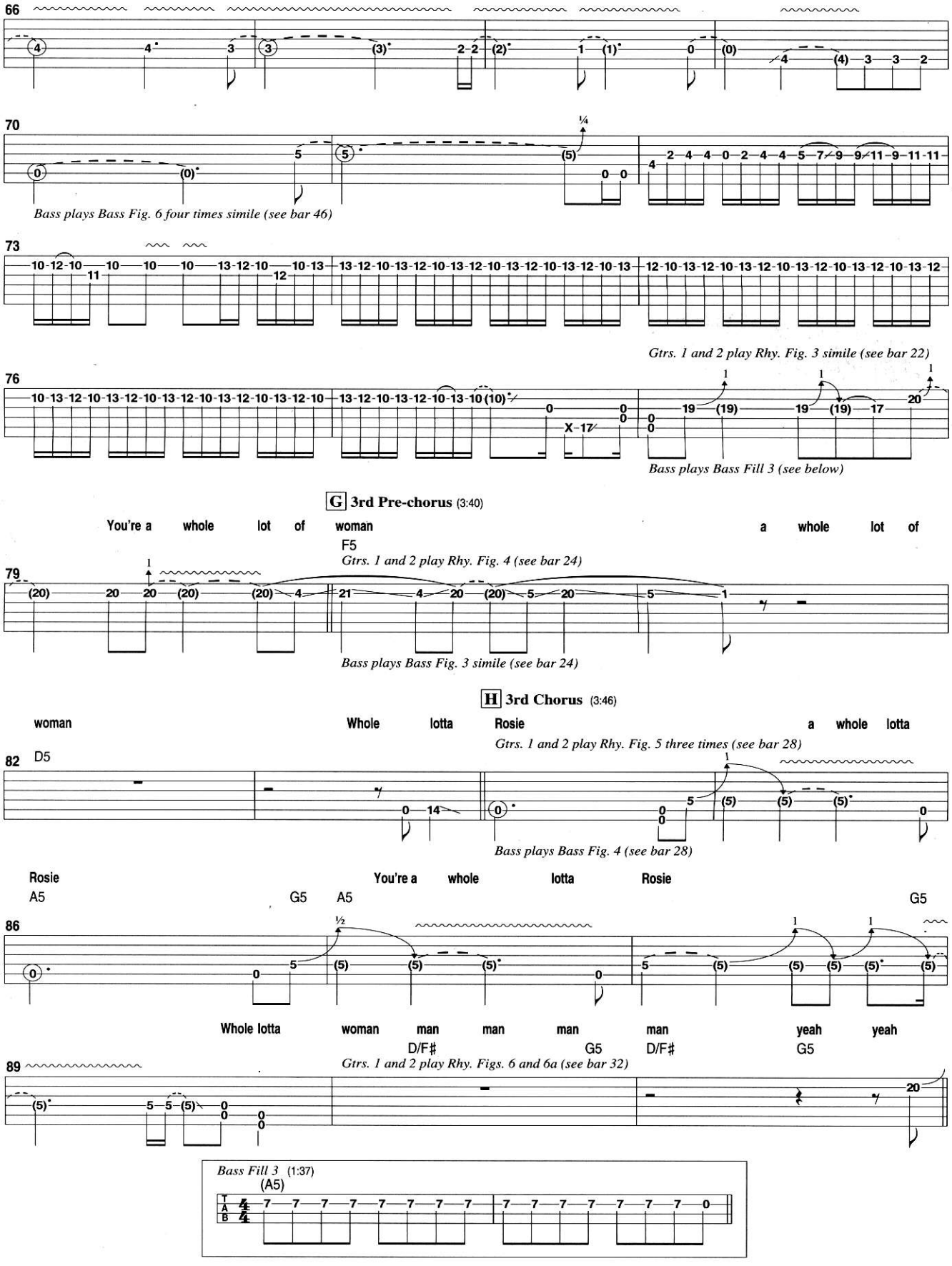
40

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 16)

43

Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 simile (see bar 34)


46
Gtr. 3
Bass
Bass Fig. 6
Bass Fig. 7
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 3 (see bar 22)
49
(repeat previous bar)
end Bass Fig. 7
F5
D5
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 4 (see bar 24)
Gtr. 3
52
Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 24)
A5
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Fill 1 (see below)
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play last bar of Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 3)
55
Bass plays Bass Fill 2 (see below)
C5 D5 C5 A5 N.C.
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 2)
58
Gtr. 3
(play 5 times)
P.M.
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 2)
C5 D5 C5 A5
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play last bar of Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 3)
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Figs. 2 and 2a seven times (see bar 36)
62
P.M.
Bass plays last bar of Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 3)
Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 three times simile (see bar 14)
Fill 1 (2:51)
A5
Gtrs. 1 and 2
Bass Fill 2 (2:51)
(A5)
(C5) (D5) (C5)(A5)


66
70
Bass plays Bass Fig. 6 four times simile (see bar 46)
73
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 3 simile (see bar 22)
76
Bass plays Bass Fill 3 (see below)
G 3rd Pre-chorus (3:40)
You're a whole lot of woman a whole lot of
F5
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 4 (see bar 24)
79
Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 simile (see bar 24)
H 3rd Chorus (3:46)
woman Whole lotta Rosie a whole lotta
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 5 three times (see bar 28)
82 D5
Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 (see bar 28)
Rosie You're a whole lotta Rosie
A5 G5 A5 G5
86
Whole lotta woman man man man man yeah yeah
D/F♯ G5 D/F♯ G5
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Figs. 6 and 6a (see bar 32)
89
Bass Fill 3 (1:37)
(A5)

I **Outro/2nd Guitar Solo** (3:58)

yeah a whole lotta Rosie

A5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Figs. 2 and 2a 16 times simile (see bar 12)

92

Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 (see bar 34)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 twice simile (see bar 16)

Whole lotta woman

95

*repeat previous beat

97

Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 six times (see bar 34)

(3rd time) a whole lotta woman

(play 3 times)

99

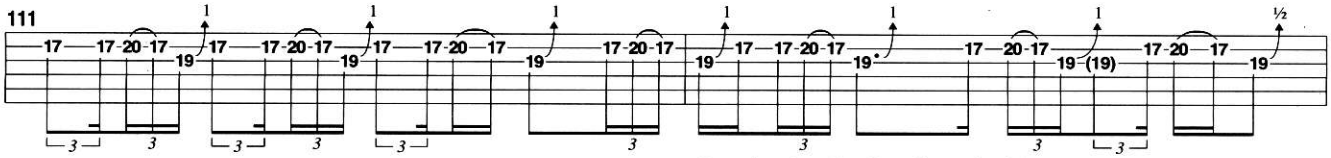
101

103

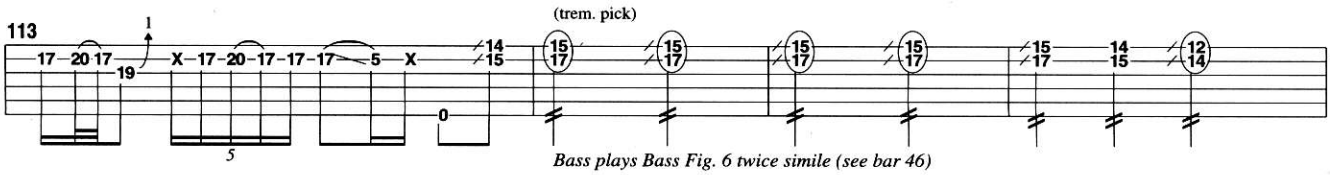
105

108

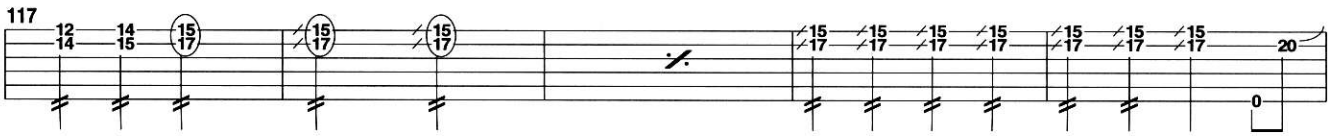
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 twice (see bar 16)



Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 simile (see bar 34)

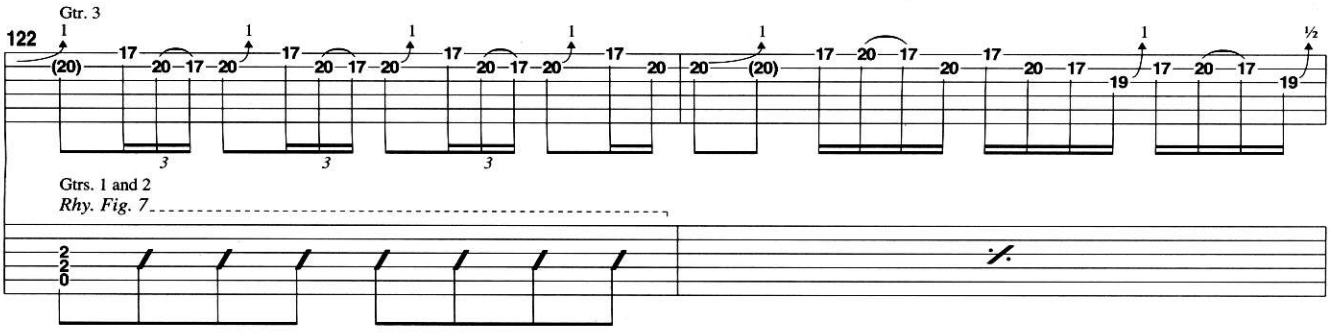


Bass plays Bass Fig. 6 twice simile (see bar 46)

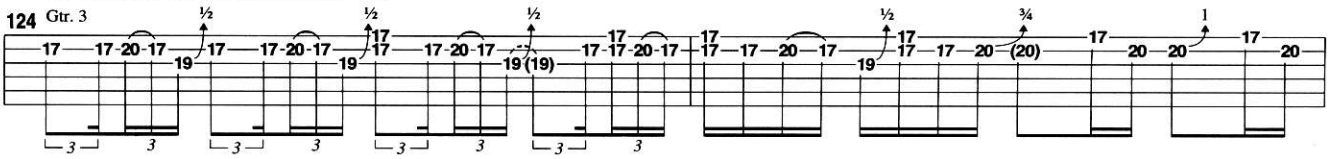


Bass plays Bass Fig. 7 simile (see bar 48)

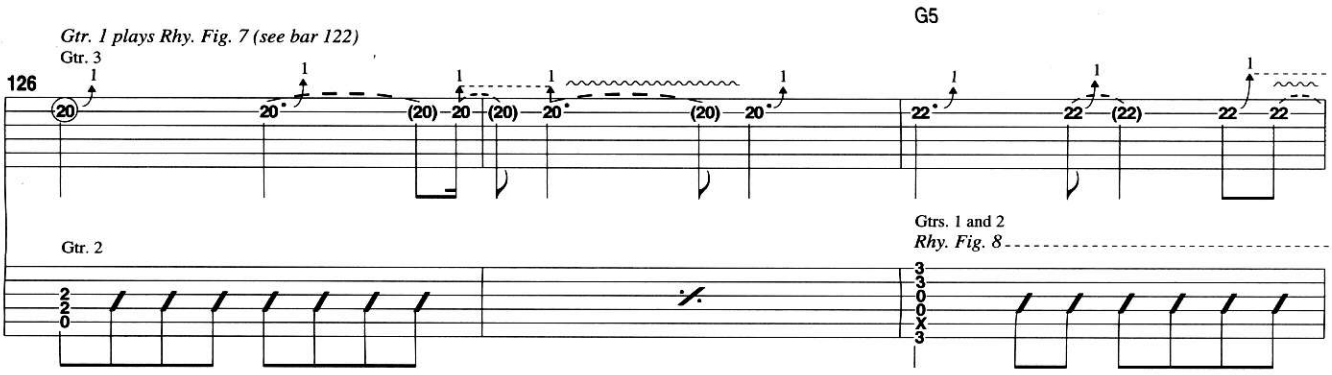
Bass plays Bass Fill 4 eleven times (see below)

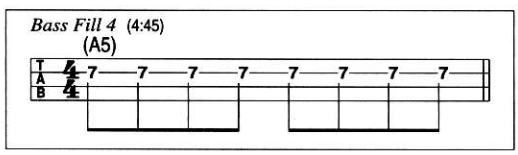


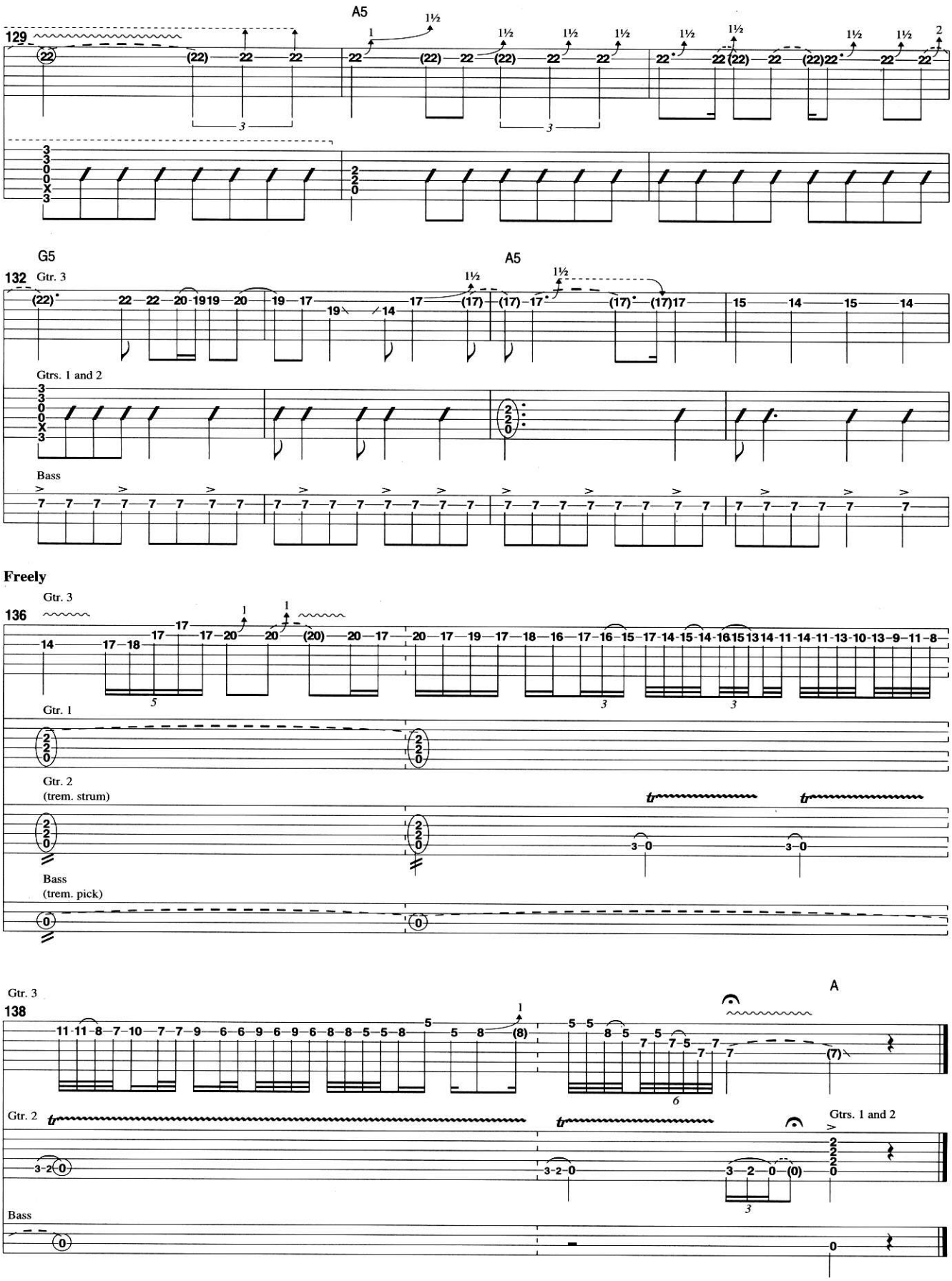
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 8 simile (see bar 128)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 7 twice (see bar 122)



Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 7 (see bar 122)






A5
129
G5
A5
132
Gtr. 3
Gtrs. 1 and 2
Bass
Freely
136
Gtr. 3
Gtr. 1
Gtr. 2
(trem. strum)
Bass
(trem. pick)
A
138
Gtr. 3
Gtr. 2
Gtrs. 1 and 2
Bass

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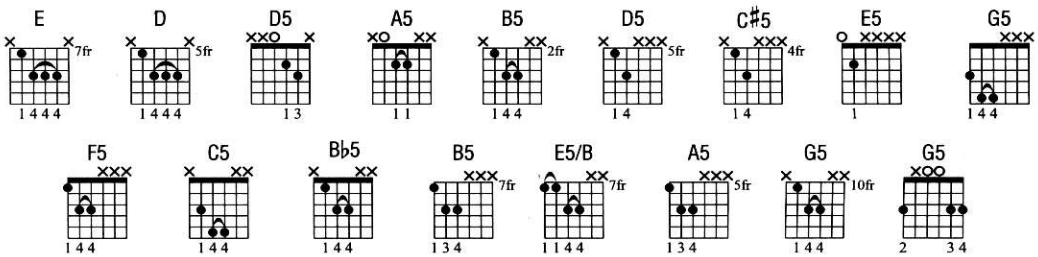
"MR. BROWNSTONE" GUNS N' ROSES

As heard on **APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION** (GEFFEN)

Words and Music by **W. Axl Rose, Slash, Izzy Stradlin', Duff McKagan and Steven Adler** ✶ *Transcribed by* **Andy Aledort**

Gtrs. are tuned down one half step (low to high: E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭ B♭ E♭).
Bass tuning (low to high): E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭.
All music sounds in the key of E♭, one half step lower than written.



A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 108

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist. and flanger) and Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist. and wah)

Strum muted strings.

(play 4 times)

Gtr. 2 continues strumming muted strings.

Gtr. 1: slide fretting hand down string while picking.

**String noise; don't pick.*

Slide fretting hand up string while picking.

E

D

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Bass (w/pick)

D5 A5 B5 N.C.(G) (E) A5 D5 C♯5 B5 E5

(flanger off)

(wah off)

P.M.

1/4

Bass Fig. 1

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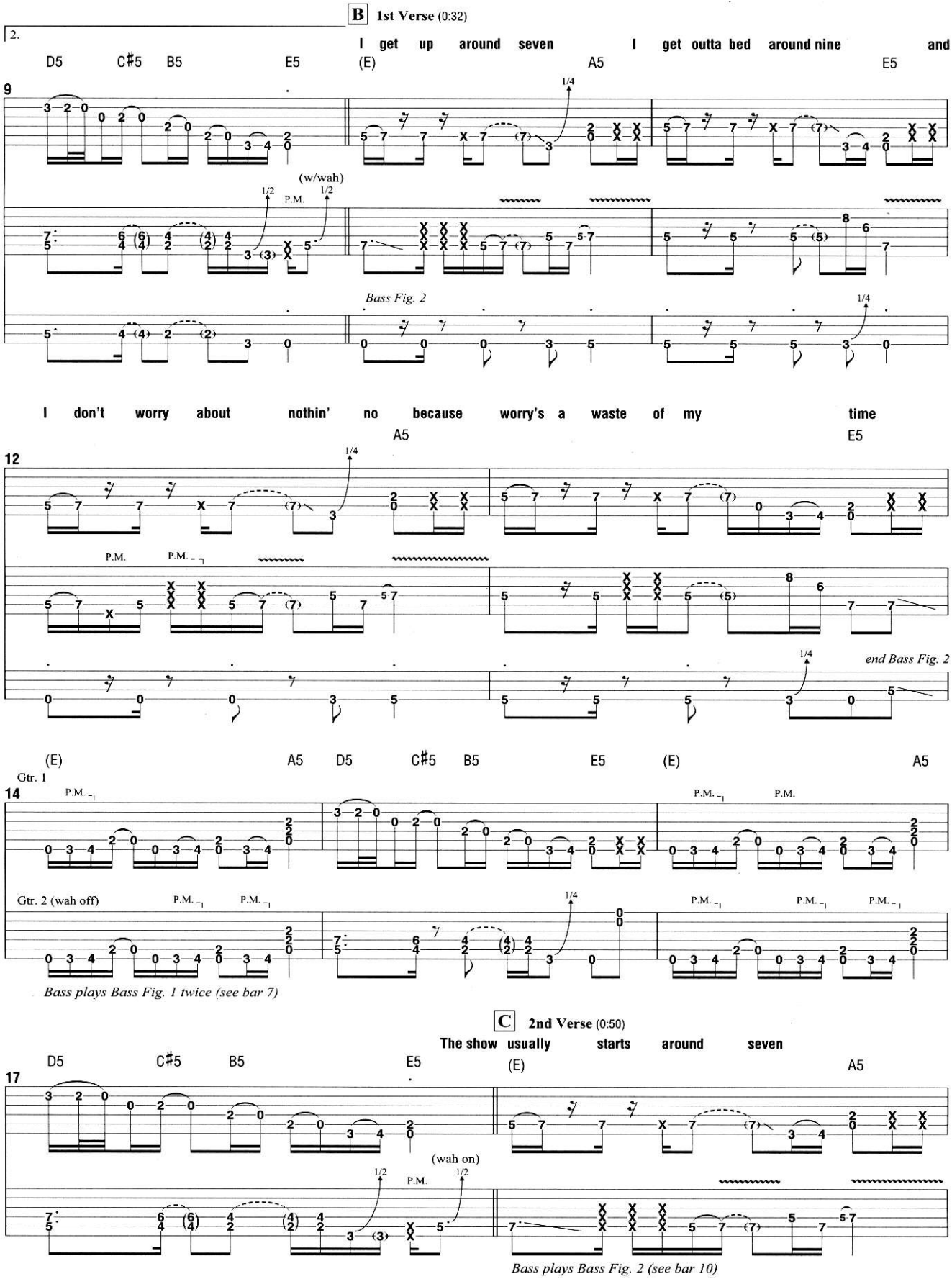
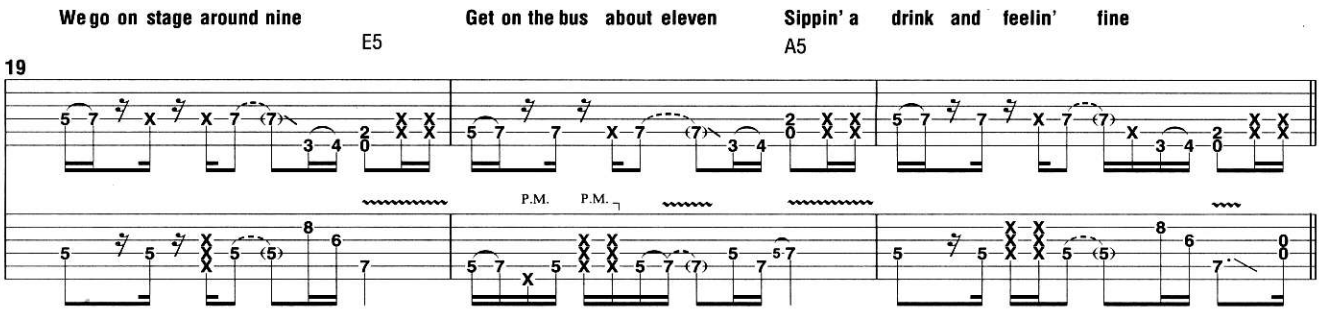
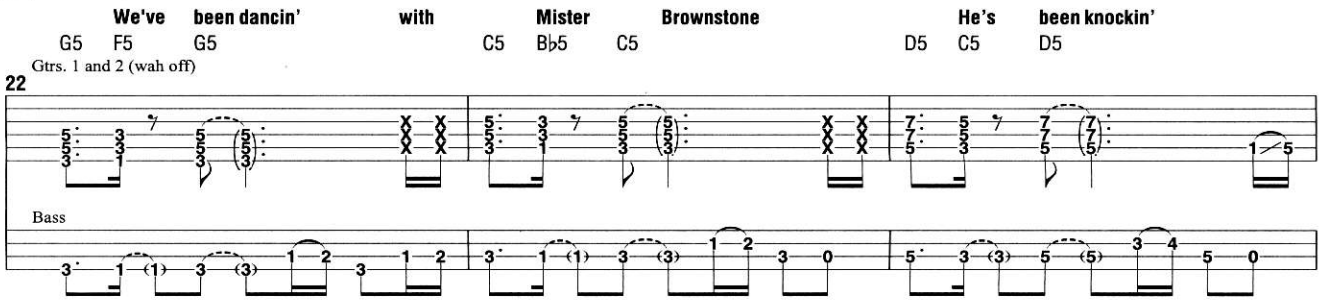
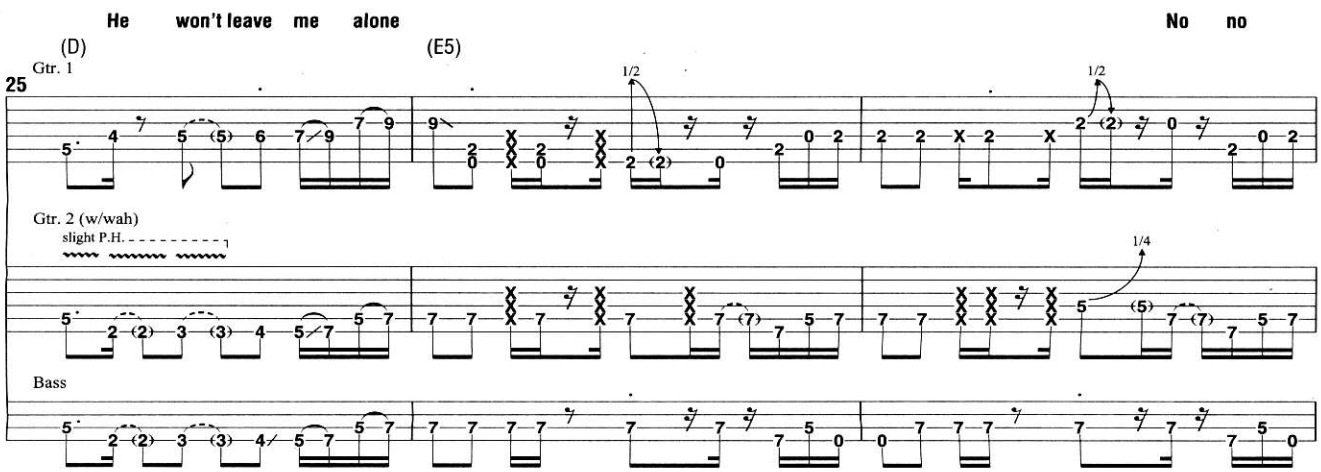
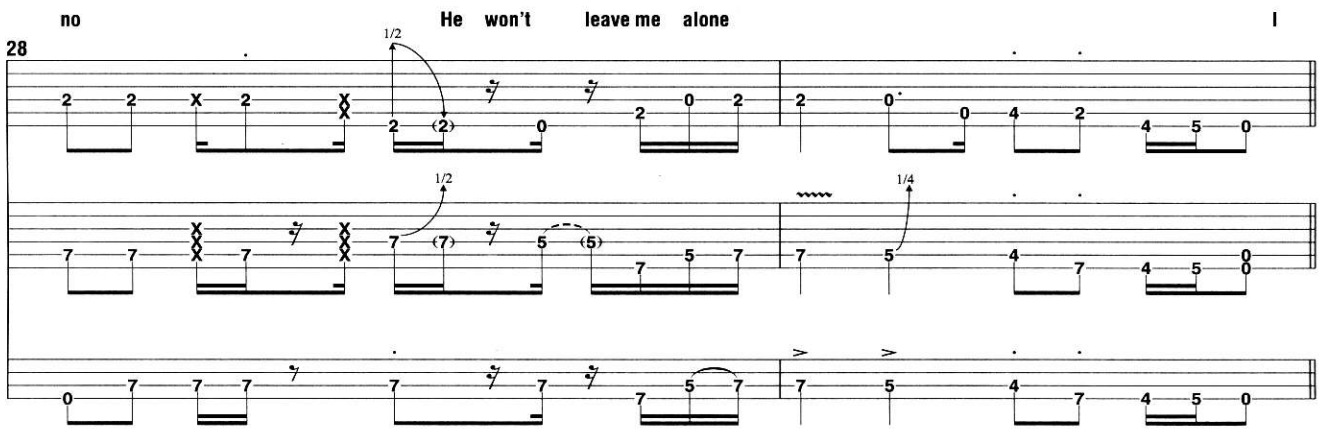

B 1st Verse (0:32)
2.
I get up around seven I get outta bed around nine and
D5 C♯5 B5 E5 (E) A5 E5
9
(w/wah)
P.M.
1/2
1/4
Bass Fig. 2
I don't worry about nothin' no because worry's a waste of my time
A5 E5
12
P.M.
end Bass Fig. 2
(E) A5 D5 C♯5 B5 E5 (E) A5
Gtr. 1
14
P.M.
Gtr. 2 (wah off)
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 7)
C 2nd Verse (0:50)
The show usually starts around seven
D5 C♯5 B5 E5 (E) A5
17
(wah on)
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 10)



D **Chorus** (0:59, 1:35, 2:59)





2nd time, skip ahead to **F** *Guitar Solo*
3rd time, skip ahead to **I**

E **Bridge** (1:17, 2:41)

used to do a little but a little wouldn't do it so the little got more and more I

B5 E5/B B5 A5 D5 A5

Gtr. 1

30

Gtr. 2 (wah off)

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

Bass

Bass Fig. 3

1. 2.

go back to **D** *Chorus*

just keep tryin' to get a little better said a little better than before I little better than before

B5 E5/D B5 A5 D5 A5 A5 G5 A5

Gtr. 1

32

Gtr. 2 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

Bass repeats Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 30)

Bass plays Bass Fill 1 first time and Bass Fill 2 second time (see below)

F **Guitar Solo** (1:53)

N.C.(F♯5) B F♯7 N.C.(E) A E7

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist., wah and delay)

35

1/2

* Gtrs. 1 and 2

Rhy. Fig. 1

P.M.

**composite arrangement*

Bass

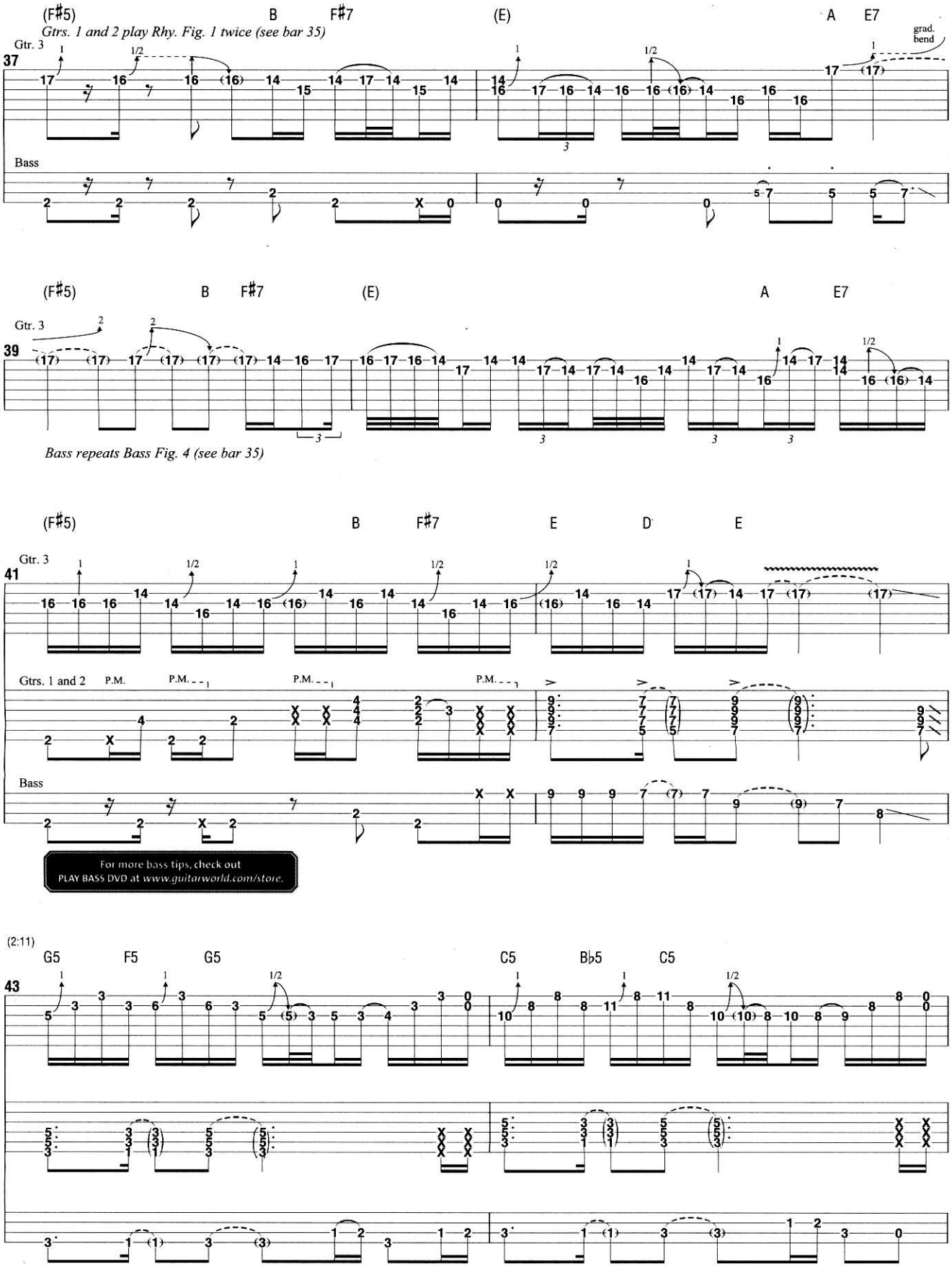
Bass Fig. 4

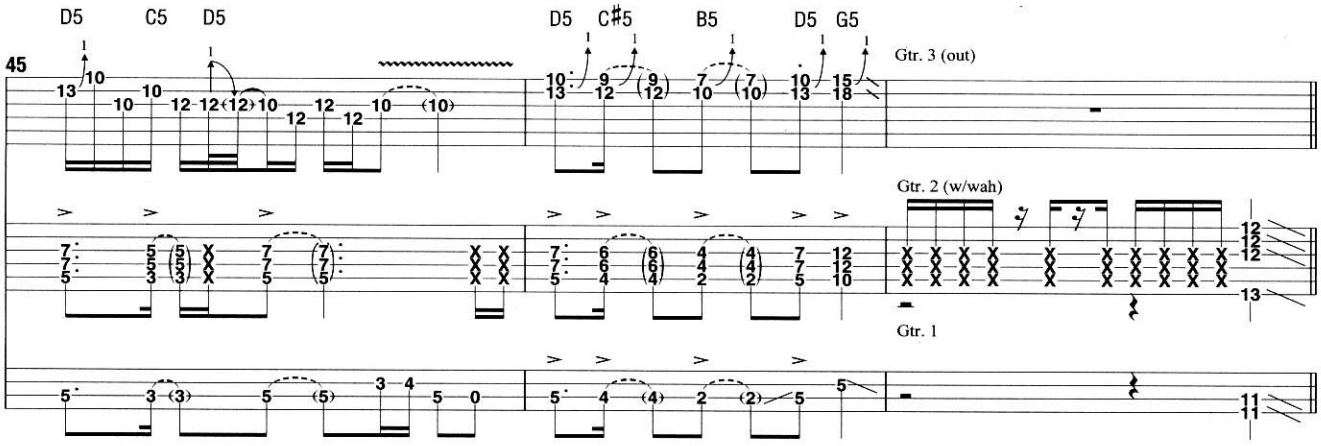
Bass Fill 1 (1:33)

A5 G5 A5

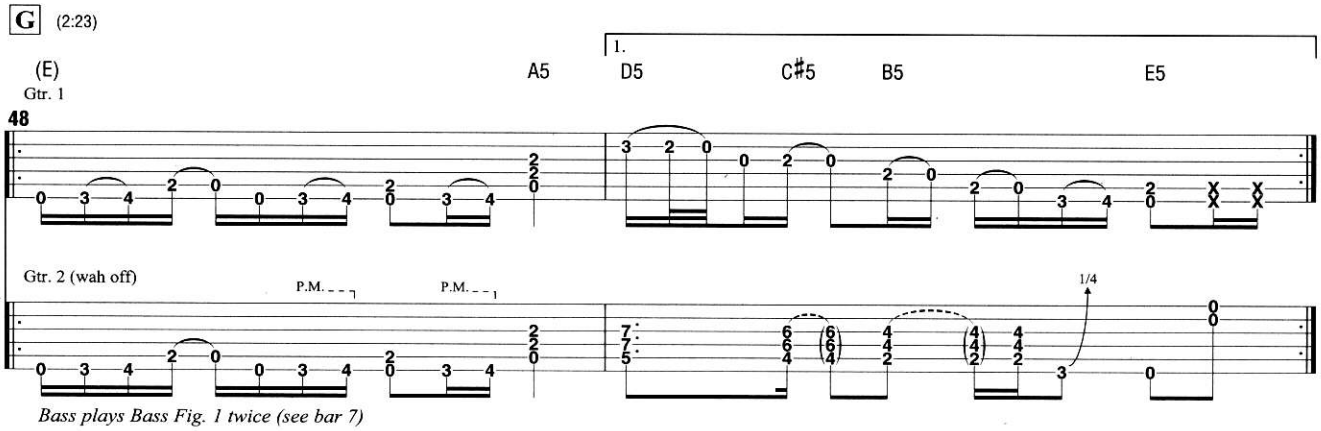
Bass Fill 2 (2:57)

A5 G5 A5


(F♯5)
B
F♯7
(E)
A
E7
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 35)
Gtr. 3
37
grad. bend
Bass
(F♯5)
B
F♯7
(E)
A
E7
Gtr. 3
39
Bass repeats Bass Fig. 4 (see bar 35)
(F♯5)
B
F♯7
E
D
E
Gtr. 3
41
Gtrs. 1 and 2
P.M.
Bass
For more bass tips, check out
PLAY BASS DVD at www.guitarworld.com/store.
(2:11)
G5
F5
G5
C5
B♭5
C5
43

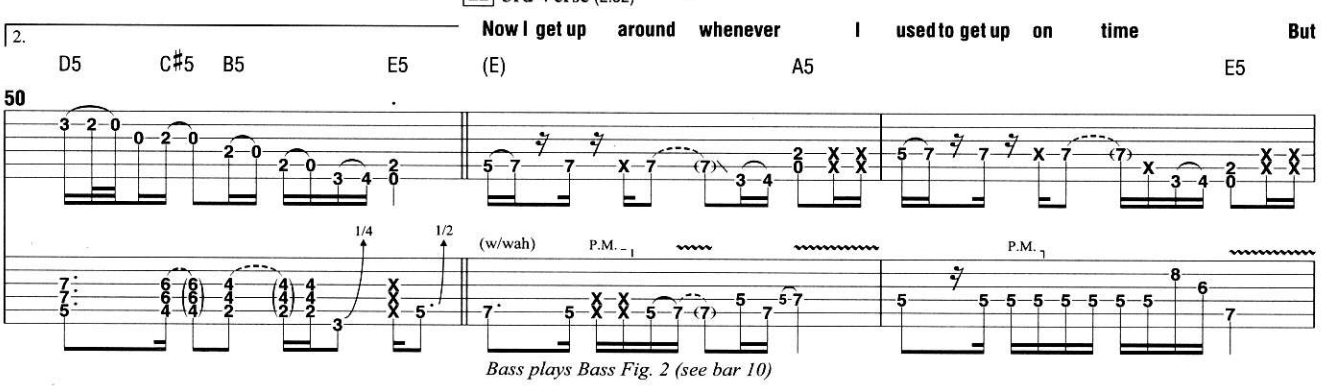


G (2:23)



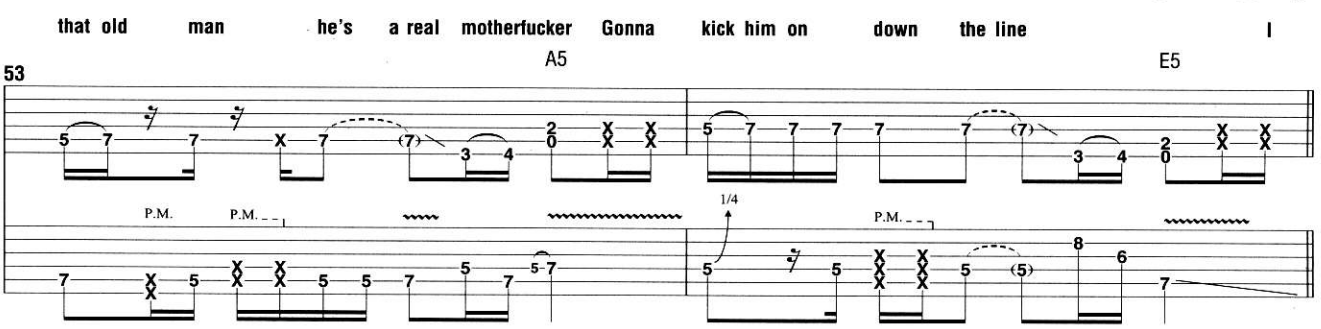
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 7)

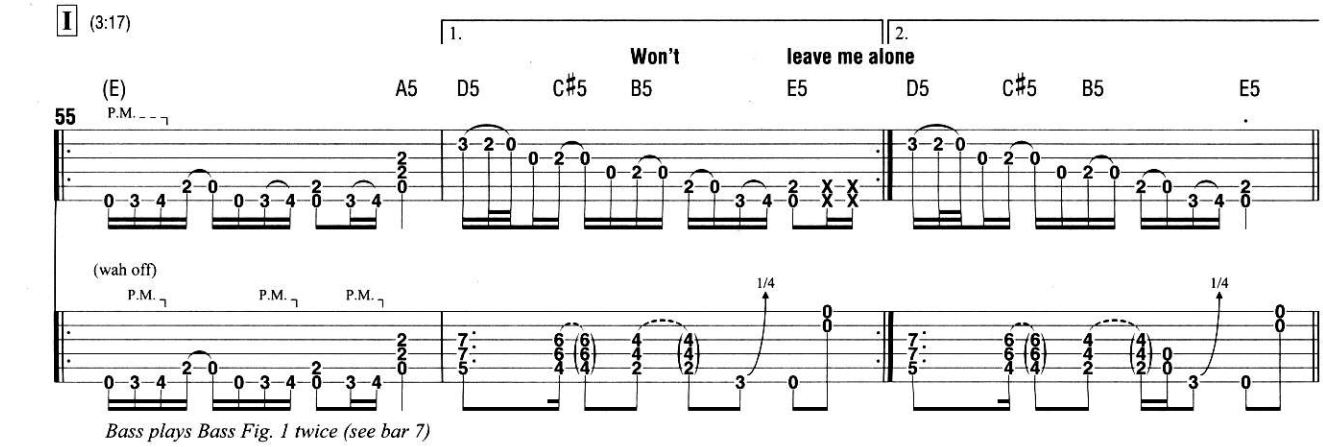
H **3rd Verse** (2:32)



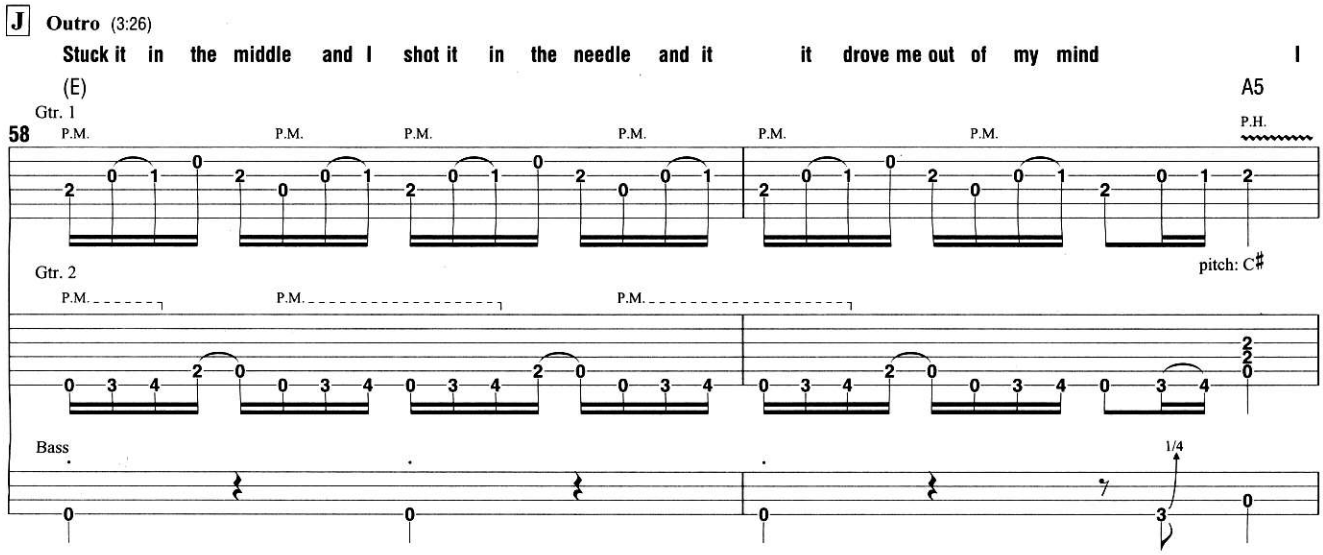
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 10)

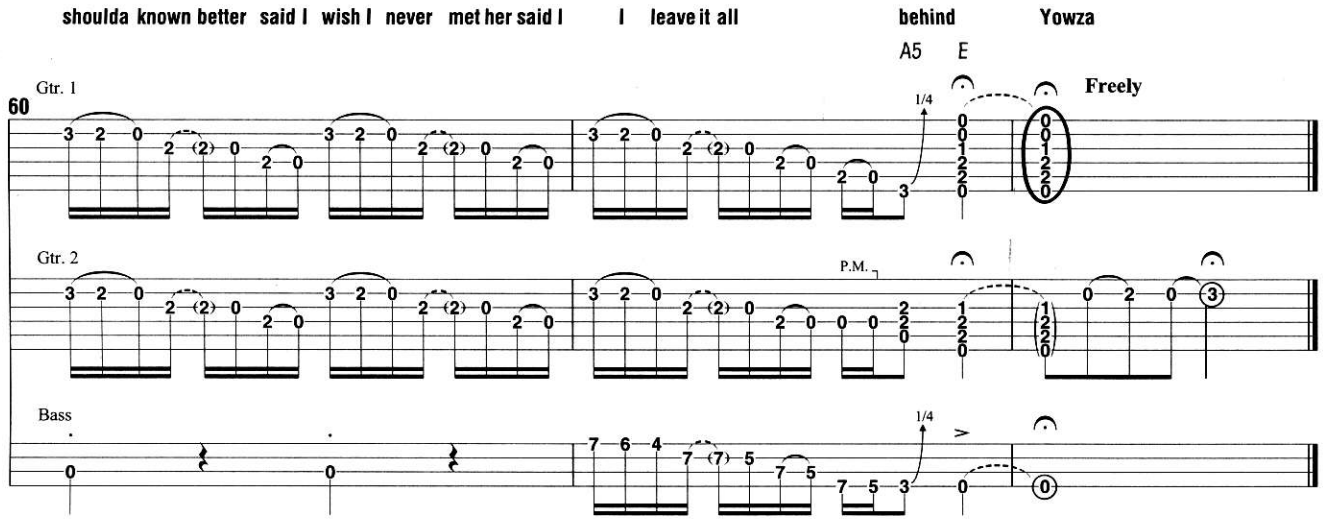
go back to **E** *Bridge*





Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 7)





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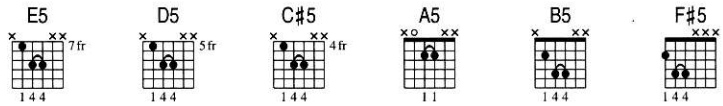
"LEGS" ZZ TOP

As heard on **ELIMINATOR** (WARNER BROS.)

Words and Music by **Billy F. Gibbons, Dusty Hill and Frank Lee Beard** ✶ *Transcribed by* **Jesse Gress**



A Intro (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 123

E5

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.)

Gtr. 1 repeats bar 2 four times

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.) P.M.

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)

Rhy. Fig. 1

(repeat previous bar)

Bass

Bass Fig. 1

D5

E5

Gtr. 2

P.H.

pitch: F♯ G♯ F♯ G♯ E D

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 3

Bass

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B **Main Riff** (0:19)

She got

E5

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see bar 3)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

11 P.M.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see bar 3)

C **1st Verse** (0:27)

legs She knows how to use them She never

E5

Gtr. 2

15 P.H. P.M.

pitch: C♯ E

Gtr. 3

Rhy. Fig. 2

Bass

Bass Fig. 2

begs She knows how to choose them She holdin'

C♯5

P.H.

19 P.H.

F♯ G♯ D♯ E♯

end Rhy. Fig. 2

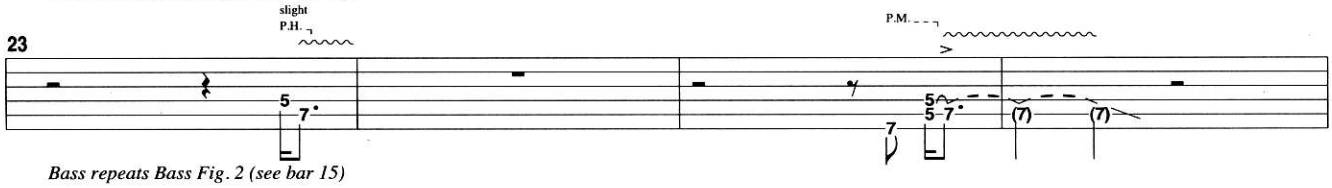
end Bass Fig. 2

For more bass tips, check out
PLAY BASS DVD at www.guitarworld.com/store.

leg wonderin' how to feel them Would you get be-

E5

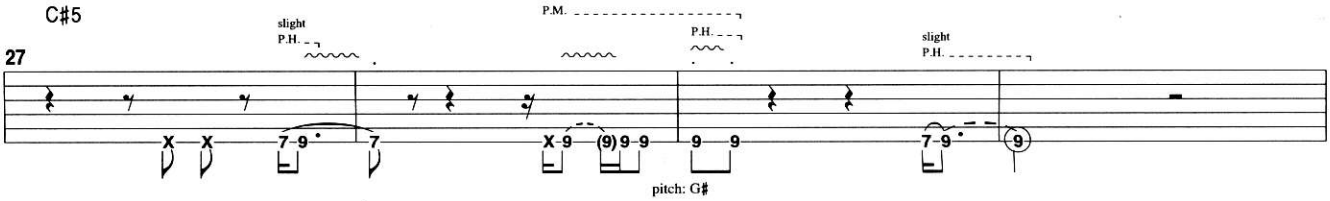
Gtr. 3 repeats Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 15)



Bass repeats Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 15)

hind them if you could only find them She's my baby

C♯5

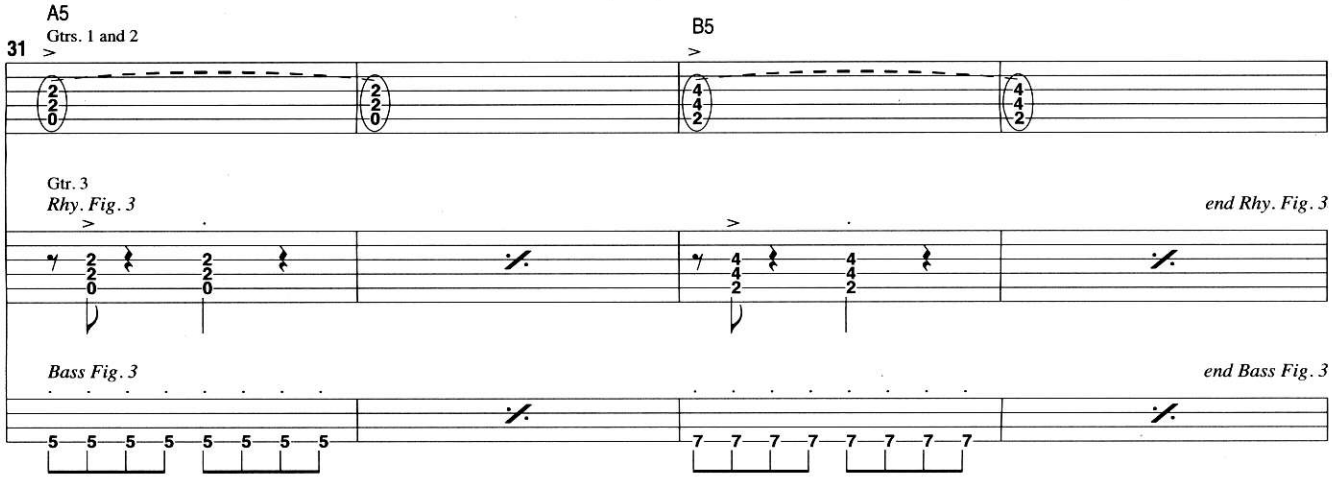


she's my baby yeah it's all

A5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

B5



Gtr. 3

Rhy. Fig. 3 *end Rhy. Fig. 3*

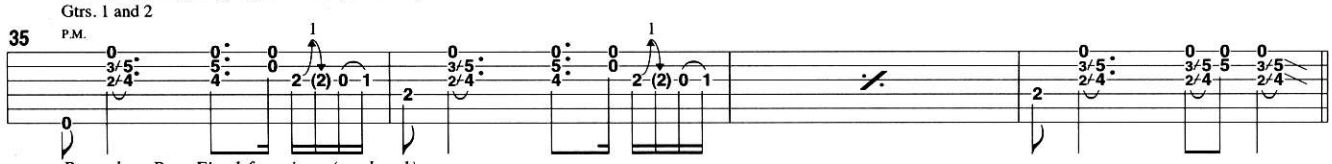
Bass Fig. 3 *end Bass Fig. 3*

right Oh yeah She's got

(E)

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see bar 3)

Gtrs. 1 and 2



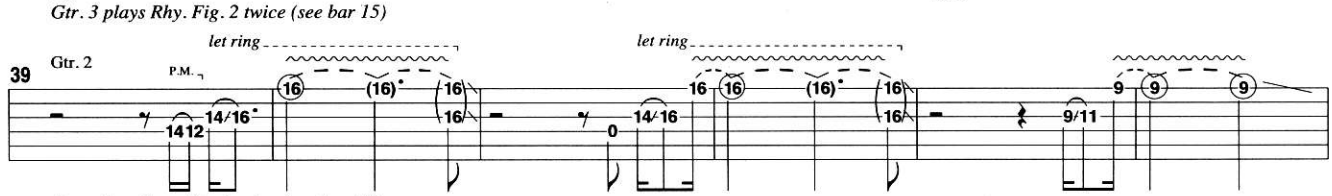
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)

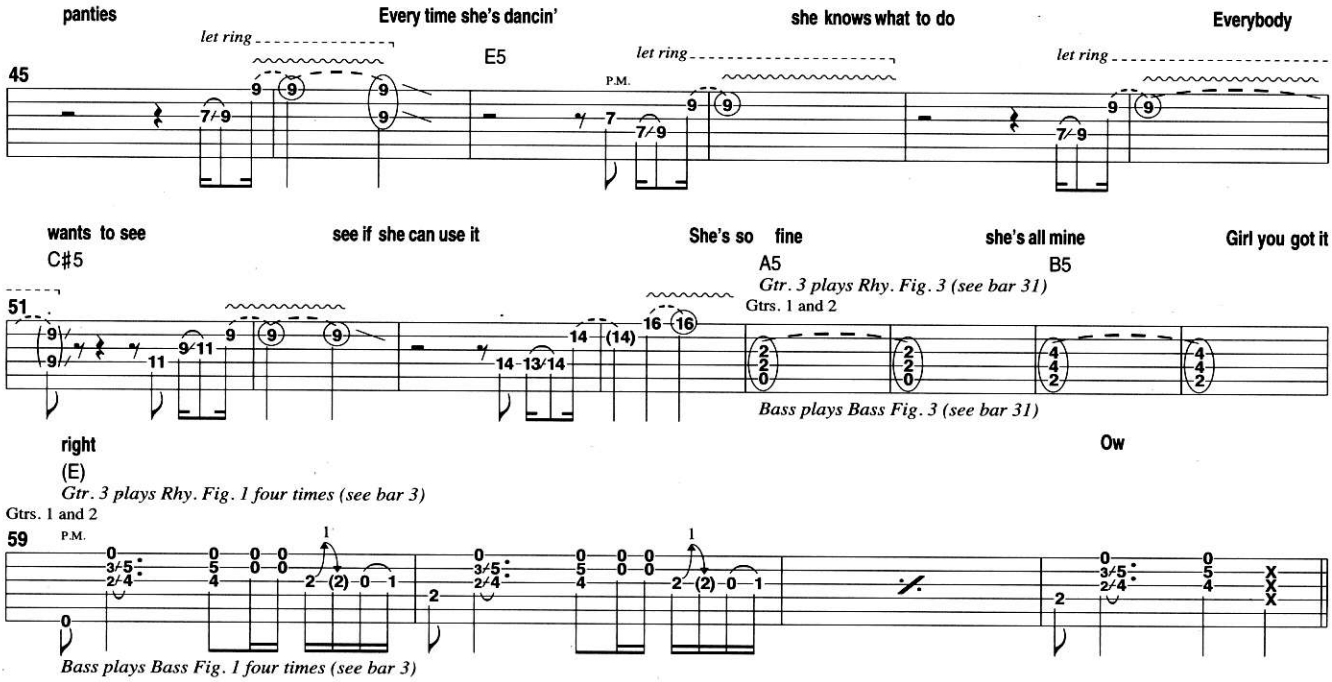
D **2nd Verse** (1:13)

hair down to her fanny She's kinda jet set Try undo her

E5 C♯5

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 twice (see bar 15)



Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 twice (see bar 15)

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 (see bar 31)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 31)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see bar 3)

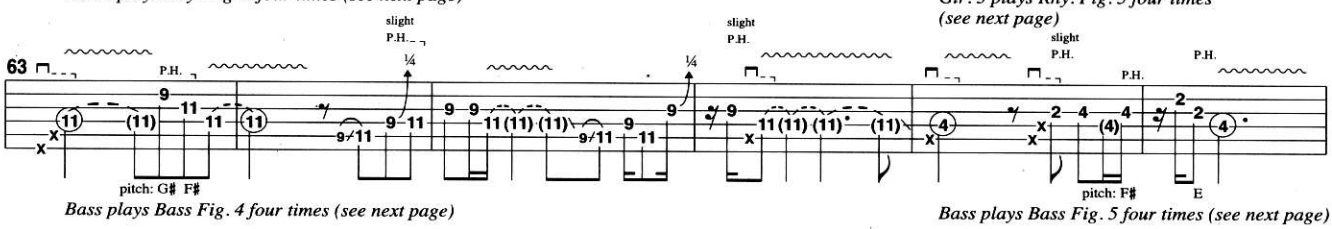
E **Guitar Solo** (1:59)

C♯5

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 4 four times (see next page)

F♯5

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 5 four times (see next page)

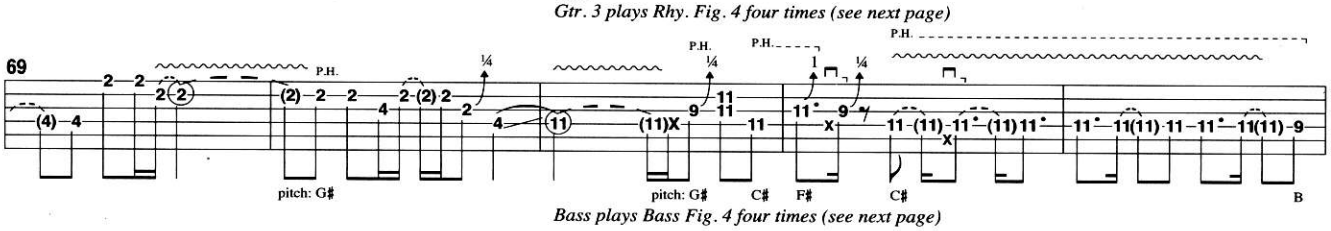


Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 four times (see next page)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 four times (see next page)

C♯5

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 4 four times (see next page)



Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 four times (see next page)

F♯5

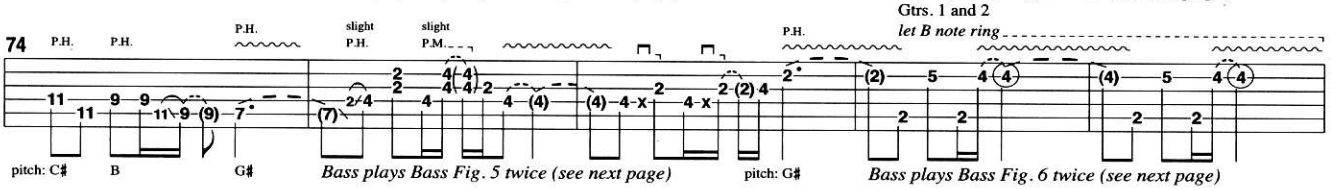
Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 5 twice (see next page)

B5

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 6 twice (see next page)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

let B note ring



Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 twice (see next page)

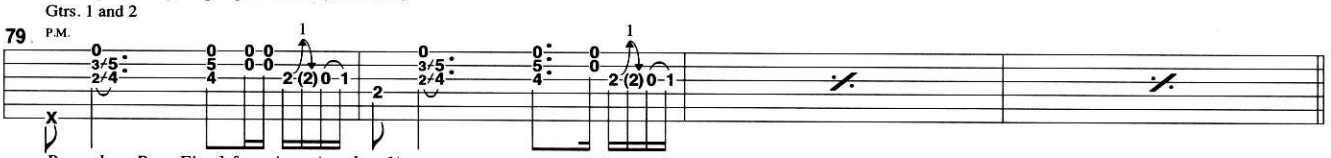
Bass plays Bass Fig. 6 twice (see next page)

(E)

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

She got



Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)

F **3rd Verse** (2:37)

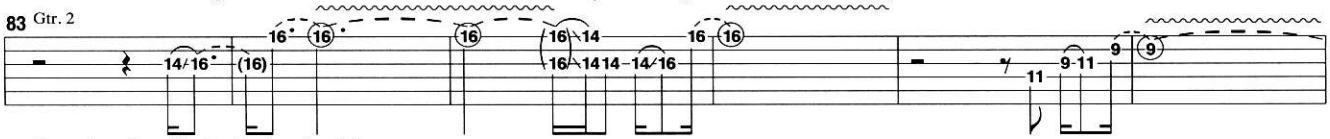
legs She knows how to use them She never begs she knows how to

E5 C♯5

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 twice (see bar 15)

let ring let ring

83 Gtr. 2

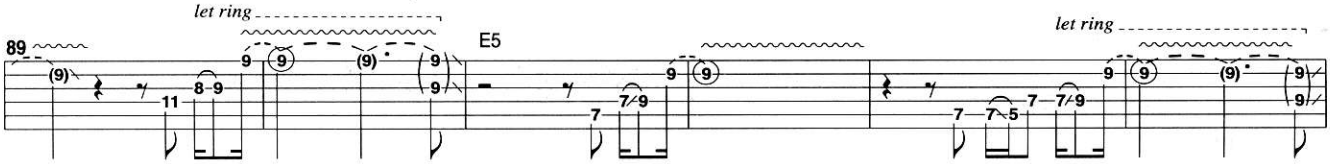


Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 twice (see bar 15)

choose them She got a dime all of the time Stays out at

let ring let ring

89 E5



night movin' through time Oh I want her Shit I got to have her The girl is all

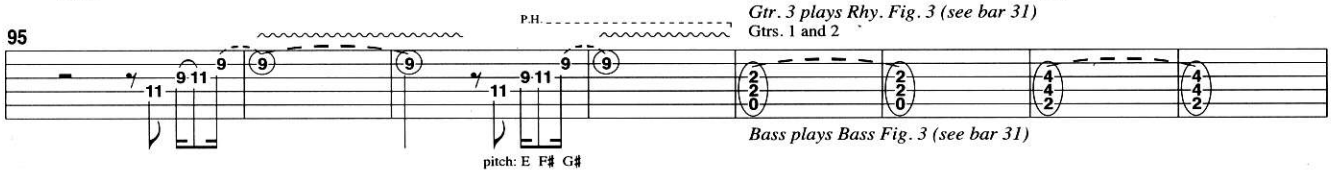
C♯5 A5 B5

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 (see bar 31)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

P.H.

95



pitch: E F♯ G♯

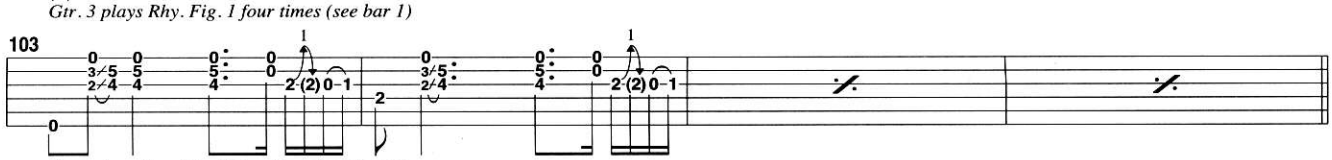
Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 31)

right She's all right Woo Oh

(E)

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)

103



Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)

G **Outro** (3:24)

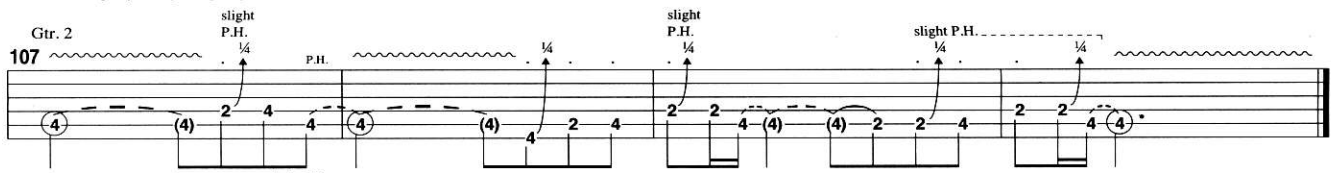
C♯5 *(begin fade)* ***fade out***

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 4 four times (see below)

Gtr. 2

slight P.H. P.H. slight P.H. slight P.H.

107

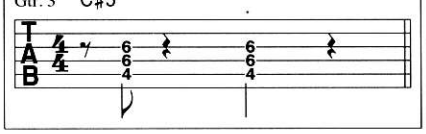


pitch: G♯

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 four times (see below)

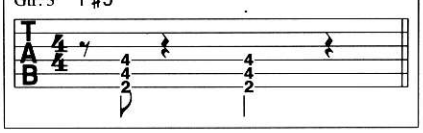
Rhy. Fig. 4 (1:59, 2:14, 3:24)

Gtr. 3 C♯5



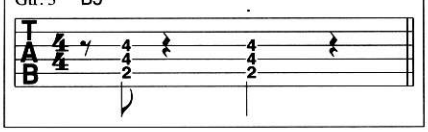
Rhy. Fig. 5 (2:07, 2:22)

Gtr. 3 F♯5



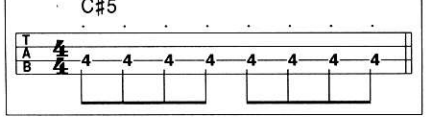
Rhy. Fig. 6 (2:26)

Gtr. 3 B5



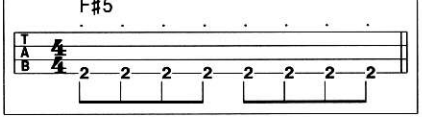
Bass Fig. 4 (1:59, 2:14, 3:24)

C♯5



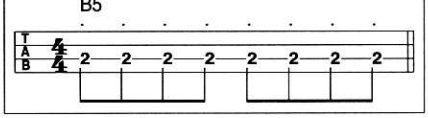
Bass Fig. 5 (2:07, 2:22)

F♯5



Bass Fig. 6 (2:26)

B5



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